

Welcome remarks for the
**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON
THE BENEFITS OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION
UNDER THE UPOV SYSTEM**
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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

I would like to start by thanking the Government of the Philippines for organizing this seminar and the Government of Japan for its financial support for the Forum.

Let me also thank the representatives from UPOV members from the Asian region and from other parts of the World, who are here to share their experiences on the benefits of the UPOV system. Equally, I would also like to express my appreciation to those countries that will share their experiences on the road to UPOV membership and why they have chosen that route.

This seminar follows the 11th meeting of the EAPVP Forum, at which the Forum adopted a 10-year plan, the foundation of which will be to assist Forum members to establish an effective system of PVP and to assist them to become UPOV members. The discussions yesterday highlighted the recognition in the Forum of the importance of providing an effective legal system of protection according to the UPOV Convention and becoming a UPOV member.

But why should any country want to become a UPOV member? In simple terms it is because all countries need new varieties of plants and the evidence is now very clear that being a UPOV member provides the most effective mechanism for encouraging the breeding of new, improved varieties and ensuring that those varieties are available to farmers. Tempted as I am, I will not elaborate any further on this theme because the purpose of today's seminar is to provide information on how the UPOV system works and the results that have been seen around the World in terms of benefits for farmers and society as a whole.

Let me emphasize that there is no question that, by far, the most important benefit of being a UPOV member is the demonstration of the effective legal basis that it provides in order to encourage plant breeding. However, I would like to take this opportunity to mention that membership of UPOV also brings practical benefits for countries in the operation of their plant variety protection system. It was recognized from the beginning of UPOV that cooperation between UPOV members is necessary for an efficient and effective system – and UPOV focuses its resources on the harmonization and tools which makes such cooperation possible. We heard only yesterday of the importance of the possibility to use DUS reports from other countries, which is key benefit between UPOV members. More recently, the launch of the UPOV PRISMA PBR Application Tool will take the benefits of UPOV membership to a new level, particularly for new UPOV members. UPOV PRISMA will help breeders, particularly SMEs, including farmer-breeders, to make their varieties available to more farmers. I am also looking forward to exploring how UPOV PRISMA can bring to reality the EAPVP Forum project, which was launched yesterday, on a regional mechanism for the UPOV members in the Asian region .

Ladies and Gentlemen

I look forward to our discussions today, which I am sure will bring us valuable information on the benefits of PVP under the UPOV Convention and I encourage you to participate actively in order to make this event as productive and interesting as possible.

Thank you.

