Speech at the Plenary Session of International Centers Week (CGIAR)

— by Prof. Lu Liang shiu, President of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences

Respected Mr. chairman,
Dear friends,

On the occasion of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research holds its annual meeting, we are very honored to have the opportunity of attending this meeting. Thus we can meet with the honored scholars and activists working in the agricultural research fields all over the world and discuss issues of mutual concern on development of agricultural scientific research. First of all, please allow me to express my heart-felt gratitude to CGIAR for its kind invitation and warm hospitality.

Last April, Mr. Baum, chairman of CGIAR, visited China when he made a presentation about CGIAR’s distinguished and effective activities in promoting the world’s grain production and agricultural research work, thus arouse our great interest. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the Chinese government has decided to formally join CGIAR as a donor country.

China has established a very good relation with certain international centers financed by CGIAR. Since 1977 the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences has started collaborative research and exchange of different forms with IRRI, CIMMYT, IBPGR, ICRI SAT, ICARDA, CIP and CIAT. By the end of 1982, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences has received 42 delegations and groups and 189 scientists from the above mentioned eight centers. Besides CAAS has also sent 38 groups and 102 scientists to visit the respective international center as well as to attend different academic meetings. The young scientists be sent to centers to study reaches the number of 127.

In my opinion, since the establishment of the relations between CAAS and the international centers, we have gained satisfactory results in technique and germplasm exchange, training of young scientists, co-research and mutual
visit by scientists. Here, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude to the above mentioned centers for their close collaboration and effective help.

Now China has become a new member of CGIAR, we will work as usual for the strengthening and developing of the scientific exchange and friendly cooperation with the international centers financed by CGIAR.

This is our first time to attend CGIAR meeting which will help us to further understand the function of CGIAR and the experience of the respective international research center, we shall cherish this opportunity to learn the rich experience and good methods from you so as to advance the continuous development of agricultural scientific research work in China.

In order to let you, our friends, have a general idea of present status of Chinese agriculture, I would like to give all of you a brief introduction.

Old China was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. Although she is a traditional farming country, her agricultural production was very backward. Numbers of peasants were sunk in the state of poverty and hunger. After the founding of the people’s Republic of China, under the leadership of the Chinese Government remarkable achievements in food and agricultural production have been made, the living standard of peasants is preliminarily improved and the rural economic condition has greatly changed.

During the past more than thirty years with the hard endeavour of the whole nation, agricultural and food production in China improved a lot. The gross annual value of agricultural production in 1982 reached 262.92 billion yuan, i.e., 2.06 times the 1952’s figure. The annual average increase is 3.8%. The grain output went up 1.16 times. At the same time, the population increased 76.6%, but speed of production development is faster than that of population increase. Since 1978 especially in 1982 Chinese agricultural production has increased 33.4% compared with 1978, among which agriculture occupies 24.3%, forestry 28.5%, animal husbandry 47%, sideline 67.4%, fishery 21.8%.

The grain production developed very rapidly, the total yield of which is 353.43 million ton among which rice yield is 181.24 million ton, wheat 68.42 million ton, maize 60.3 million ton. All these three crops occupy 82% of the total output of grain. The population in China is nearly one quarter of the world population, but the area of arable land in China accounts for only 7.9% of the world total. As a developing country, China has solved the problem of clothes and food of approximately one fourth of the world. Needless to say, this is alone a great achievement and also a
tremendous contribution to the world’s food and agricultural production.

In recent years the cause of agricultural science, technology and education developed rapidly. At present, there are more than 1,000 institutions of agricultural sciences in China, with about 0.2 million staffs, among whom more than 40,000 are agricultural scientific research workers and technicians. There are 50,000 agricultural extension services of all levels. Nearly every county has an agricultural extension and training service, therefore a system of agriculture science and technology is elementarily formed. Since liberation there has been more than 0.8 million graduates from agricultural colleges and middle schools. At present there are 70 senior agricultural colleges and 392 agricultural middle schools in China. According to the needs of agricultural production, all the agricultural scientific institutions and agricultural colleges laid their emphasis on the basic, theoretic, exploit, practical research and gained many satisfactory results among which some has reached the advanced world level, such as; the breeding of dwarf rice, the utilization of heterosis of hybrid, criticali of allo-octoploid, cultivation of high yield crops, reform of cropping system, the synthetic control of wheat stripe-rust and the equine infectious anemia vaccine etc...

To put it simple, we must exert our own advantage that is to synthetically mend mountain, water, forest, pasture, to develop agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and sideline and to synthetically manage agriculture, sideline, industry and trade ---- this is a road of Chinese style for the agricultural modernization which will combine the intensive cultivation of land with modern science and technology—the science and technology with less invest, little energy waste, high yield, intensive labor so as to raise the productivity of land and labor as well as commercial rate of agricultural products. By this way china will realize the strategic target of quadrupling the gross annual value of industrial and agricultural output.

Adopting open-door policy is one of our basic foreign policies. China is a developing socialist country. Although we have gained many achievements, our economic base is very weak, the level of agricultural science and technology is not so advanced as that of the developed countries. Besides exerting our own advantage, we should conduct exchange of science and technology more effectively, learn from the advanced foreign experiences and other’s strong points to offset our weaknesses so as to speed up the modernization of China’s agriculture.

Now China has become a member of CGIAR. I am fully convinced that there exists a prosperous future for the collaboration between CGIAR.
and China. It is our sincere desire to cooperate more closely with CGIAR and its international research centers and to contribute more to the continuous developments of agriculture science and to the welfare and advance of whole mankind.

Wish the conference great success!

Thank you.