

3rd Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific

Opening Remarks by Mr. Zhao Bing, Head of CSAM

Hon. Cynthia A. Villar, Senator and Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Senate of the Philippines;

Distinguished Ms. Querobine Deapera, Acting Director for Economic & Development, Office of United Nations and Other International Organizations, Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs;

Distinguished Engr. Ariel T. Cayanan, Executive Director, Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries;

Hon. Ariodear Rico, Chairman of the ASEAN Agricultural and Bio-systems Engineering Coordinating Committee;

Distinguished Mr. Dennis M. Guerrero, Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture;

Distinguished Mr. Genaro M. Tolentino, President of the Philippine Society of Agricultural Engineers;

Distinguished Dr. Aura C. Matias, Dean of UP College of Engineering

Distinguished Mr. Marc Proksch, Chief of the Business and Development Section of UNESCAP;

Mr. Jose Luis Fernandez, Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the Philippines;

Representatives from ESCAP member countries and international organizations and institutions;

Colleagues;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, I would like to warmly welcome you to the 3rd Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific, the 3rd ASEAN Conference of the Agricultural and Bio-systems Engineering,

and the 12th Engineering Research and Development for Technology (ERDT) Conference.

My heartfelt gratitude and appreciation goes to our Philippine partners and co-organizers - Board of Agricultural Engineering of the Professional Regulation Commission, College of Engineering and Agro-Industrial Technology, University of the Philippines-Los Banos, Agricultural and Fisheries Mechanization Committee of the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Philippine Society of Agricultural Engineer. The holding of these events were barely possible without the commitment and dedication of the Philippine host with incredible energy and performance.

Holding the 3rd Regional Forum of CSAM in the Philippines, the very place that CSAM started in 1977 from the Regional Network for Agricultural Machinery (RNAM) inspired me and my colleagues towards attainment of the goals and missions our successors set; meanwhile, we felt the responsibilities and urgent needs to adjust and shift the helm to keep abreast with the global moves, especially for sustainable development.

Hence, in the past few years, CSAM made enormous efforts to recraft its strategic direction, revive its vitality, re-delineate its project framework, and re-define its partnership strategies and outreaching endeavours. I am delighted to see, as you all witnessed, that the image and influence of the Centre has been significantly enhanced in the community of the agricultural mechanization in the region and beyond via implementing concrete and need-oriented projects and initiatives.

To name some, the Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific provides platform for high-level policy dialogues and regional cooperation; the Asian and Pacific Network for Testing of Agricultural Machinery aims to harmonize the testing standards and codes for better quality machinery; the regional database of

agricultural mechanization pursues to facilitate evidence-based decision making; the Regional Council of Agricultural Machinery Associations in Asia and the Pacific targets for a vibrant and healthy agricultural machinery industry in the region.

More importantly, we have established extensive strategic partnerships with various key stakeholders covering government agencies, international/regional organizations, academic and research institutes, civil society organizations, and private sectors. This, the people, indeed, matters for the sustained development of an organization like CSAM; it also matters for the sustainable development of agricultural mechanization in the region.

Therefore, we gather together today, to share ideas and insights of the important topic of “Human Resource Development for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization”. Human resources development lies at the heart of economic, social and environmental development. A skilled, educated, healthy, capable, productive and flexible workforce, equipped with knowledge of newly emerging areas, is the foundation for countries to achieve sustainable economic growth and social progress.

With consideration of the reality that food security remains an urgent issue that countries must face and resolve due to the highest concentration of hungry populations and grappling with resource and environmental constraints in the Asia and the Pacific, human resource development efforts in agriculture, and indeed, the whole rural population, become more significant and urgent.

Human resource development for sustainable agricultural mechanization, in specific, covers an entire set of variables that determines outcomes. It is vital to recognize that as much as it is depended on formal education and training systems, and workforce organizations, it is also depended on informal extension and awareness improvement efforts for the grassroots, particularly, the small-holders and women. Comparative studies from several countries

provide evidences that a \$1000 increment in extension spending in agriculture was associated with a \$2173 or more increase in farm output within a two-year period.

It is fortunate that we will have chance to listen your insightful thinking and sharing good practices of your respective countries and agencies in these regards in the following session today and tomorrow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The importance of human resource development could never be overemphasised. The Chinese philosopher, Guanzi (551 - 479BC) said that:

"When planning for one year,
there's nothing better than planting grain,
When planning for ten years,
there's nothing better than planting trees,
When planning for a lifetime,
there's nothing better than planting men".

I would like us to join hands, and work together to "plant" skilled, educated, healthy, capable, productive and flexible workforce and rural population conductive to the achievement of sustainable agricultural mechanization in the region.

Thank you.