

Opening Remarks
by Dr. Li Yutong, Head, Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization,
The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

**Regional Workshop for Research and Academic Institutions on: ‘Establishing a
Cooperation Mechanism for Human Resource Development on Sustainable
Agricultural Mechanization’**

13-15 April 2017, Nanjing, China

Distinguished Dr. Zhang Huijie, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Cooperation of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), Dr. Chen Qiaomin, Director of Nanjing Research Institute for Agricultural Mechanization, and Dr. Qu Sixi, Representative/Country Director of the China Office of the United Nations World Food Programme,

Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome all of you to this *Regional Workshop for Research and Academic Institutions on: ‘Establishing a Cooperation Mechanism for Human Resource Development on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization’*.

At the outset, let me express my sincere appreciation to our co-organizer – Nanjing Research Institute for Agricultural Mechanization (NRIAM) of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) for their strong commitment, efficiency, professionalism, and dedication in order to make this event happen.

The unique gathering here today demonstrates your strong and shared interest to enhance cooperation among Research and Academic Institutions on sustainable agricultural mechanization and related human resource development. As you may recall, at the 3rd Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific held on 9-11 December 2015 in Manila, the Philippines, there was consensus that having a cooperation mechanism for research and academic institutions of agricultural mechanization is of great importance considering the realities of the region.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region face significant challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under the circumstances of persistent poverty, reduced availability of agricultural labour, demographic changes involving larger proportion of women and ageing agricultural workers in a number of countries, inefficient agricultural value chains, degradation of natural resources and the environment, and impacts of climate change,

agricultural mechanization must move from pure technology to a broader context meeting technological, economic, social, environmental and cultural requirements, and offering innovative and economically viable opportunities for growers, consumers, policymakers and other stakeholders in the entire food system. Thus, sustainable agricultural mechanization acquires importance in today's context.

Promoting sustainable agricultural mechanization in Asia and the Pacific is both promising and challenging. The region has made great progress over the past six decades. However, the overall level of development of agricultural mechanization in the region is comparatively low with vast disparity among countries and different districts within the same country. Big gaps also exist among different crops and different stages of production. The disparity and gaps imply vital significance and great potential for regional cooperation and coordination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In your countries, all of you stand at the forefront to define and lead the future direction of sustainable agricultural mechanization and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It is crucial that research and academic institutions working on agricultural mechanization in the region join hands and address relevant issues collectively through innovative partnerships. We firmly believe that a lot could be done among you through an effective cooperation mechanism.

The Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), is a regional institution of UNESCAP devoted to promoting sustainable agricultural mechanization in the region. It has a comparative advantage in facilitating regional or sub-regional cooperation mechanisms and networks of various stakeholders in the region.

Responding to the call made at the 3rd Regional Forum, we would like to propose for your consideration establishment of an "Asian and Pacific Cooperation Network of Research and Academic Institutions on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ANRAIM)". CSAM is looking forward to collaborate with you, for the shared cause of promoting sustainable agricultural mechanization in Asia and the Pacific and fulfilling our shared commitment to '*leave no one behind*'.

To conclude, I would like to sincerely thank you for your participation and invite you to actively share your unique insights and perspectives for the proposed cooperation network. Let's start from the small and plan for the big in a pragmatic and phased manner.

I would like to wish you every success in your deliberations and a pleasant stay in Nanjing.

I thank you.