

President's Report on Overseas Business Trip to the Philippines, February 10-12, 2019

This past February I was in the Philippines for a business trip. The main activities of my visit included a forum held at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the opening ceremony of the International Station for Tropical Agricultural Sciences (ISTAS), and signing ceremonies for inter-university academic exchange agreements with both IRRI and Visayas State University (VSU). In what follows I would like to give you all a clearer picture of the trip.

1. Visit to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

For this trip to the Philippines I stayed in Los Baños, located a two-hour drive from Manila by car, and first, I visited IRRI. The institute, which was founded in 1960 and is dedicated mainly to research on rice, boasts vast land resources for outdoor experimental farms as well as indoor experimental farms with an artificially controlled environment.

At the IRRI I met with Dr. Matthew Morell, its Director General, and took a tour of the facilities.



With Dr. Morell, Director General, IRRI

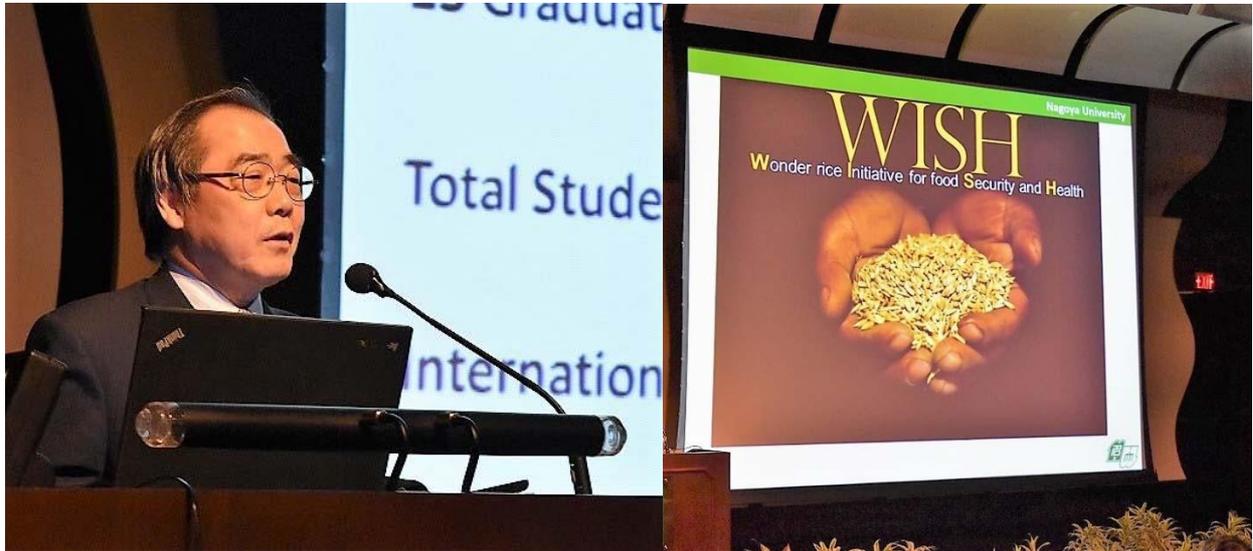


Inspection of an experimental field at IIRI



Group photo with researchers and staff from IIRI and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB)

While there I participated in an international forum held at the IRRI, titled “Catalyzing Partnerships in Research Excellence and Internationalization of Education Towards Food Security in the Asian and African Region.” In addition to providing a general overview of Nagoya University’s activities, I also discussed the state of exchanges between NU and institutions in the Philippines and presented NU’s efforts in addressing issues in agriculture and food security.



Presentation on Nagoya University and its activities

After the forum, Dr. Morell and I signed an agreement on the inter-university academic exchange between NU and IRRI.



Signing ceremony for the MOU on inter-university academic exchange with IRRI

2. Attending the Opening Ceremony of the International Station for Tropical Agricultural Sciences (ISTAS)

ISTAS is an international platform for education and research with social impact, organized through collaboration between NU, UPLB, VSU, and the Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia (RUA). This ceremony commemorated its launch.

In my greeting at the ceremony, I noted that NU has been engaged in exchanges with institutions in the Philippines since the 1970s that have resulted in a network of researchers working to solve major global issues. I then happily announced that we will establish the main station of ISTAS at UPLB, with a substation at VSU to follow an agreement for inter-university academic exchange between NU and VSU.



At the Opening Ceremony of ISTAS

I signed the MOU on inter-university academic exchange with VSU later during the Opening Ceremony.



Signing ceremony for the MOU on inter-university academic exchange with VSU



Group photo of attendees at the Opening Ceremony of ISTAS

3. President's Personal Thoughts

This trip was a 3-day whirlwind tour with the following major objectives:

- 1) Signing an MOU with IRRI and receiving a donation of research instruments from them for the Philippines satellite campus of our Asian Satellite Campuses Institute (ASCI)
- 2) Attending the opening ceremony of ISTAS and using the occasion to sign another MOU with VSU, whose president Dr. Edgardo E. Tulin is an NU alumnus.

Another important purpose was to have a meeting with UPLB, a long-time partner for over 40 years, and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study for Research and Agriculture (SEARCA), with which NU has had a close relationship in agriculture following an exchange agreement in 1983, so that we could share information and exchange opinions on future direction of collaboration and other matters.

We understand these universities and institutions in the Philippines have been very active in cooperating with NU in recent years to provide scholarship programs for ASCI students, spaces for collaborative work, and joint research opportunities, and as expectations directed toward us grow, we highly appreciate your greatest support for our activities among other countries. I believe that tackling issues in agriculture and food security is essential to realizing happy, sustainable development for humankind in the future, and that in this area it is imperative that NU seek collaboration to spur new innovation, mainly in Asia but also with countries in Africa and throughout the rest of the world. I cannot understate the significance of being able to share an awareness of these and other issues with the leaders I met during my trip, and furthermore, I was reminded once again of their strong interest in working closely with Japan, and especially NU, in agriculture and food security as well as a broad range of other areas. I would also like to once again honor the constant efforts of our colleagues at Nagoya University on which so much of this depends.

According to Dr. Morell, Director General of IRRI, per capita rice consumption is decreasing not only in Japan but throughout the world. However, due to global population growth, we are still facing a rapid increase in demand for rice as one of the world's three most important grains (rice, wheat, and corn). This is why the research at IRRI is of great significance as we adapt to global environmental transformations like climate change (especially severe droughts and changes in soil conditions).

All things considered, I truly feel that the launch of ISTAS and its joint research projects and programs for researcher and student exchanges among NU, UPLB, VSU and RUA (in Cambodia) will be a great importance for our future world. That is, its work will play a crucial role in ensuring food security and supporting the business and commerce that come with it. I would like to mention that two researchers from Gifu University also joined our delegation this time to see firsthand NU's activities overseas. With discussions on the future establishment of the Tokai National University System ongoing, I would be thrilled if our two universities can incubate more specific ideas for joint research and other projects.