



## **CEOP/ IGWCO Joint Meeting**

28 Feb. 2005 to 4 March 2005, Sanjo Conference Hall, The University of Tokyo

### **FAO Liaison Office in Japan**

**Director: Mr. Yasuo ENDO**

**On behalf of the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, I would like to express my pleasure of being able to join you on the occasion of this workshop.**

**As FAO representative in Japan, I briefly touch upon FAO's position and ongoing actions on IGOS.**

**FAO's major challenge is to halve the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition by 2015 as one of the important millennium goals. But, the reality is that 852 million people worldwide are undernourished in 2000-2002. Primary causes of such food crises are three fold: first is economic factor such as the devastated economic fundamentals which can be seen Africa and South Asia: second is a political element like the long lasting wars and internal strife : the third is natural disaster such as drought and flood. The last factor clearly indicates that food insecurity and the related poverty are closely associated with the direct and indirect global waster cycle on the earth.**

**This implies that Earth ecosystems are increasingly experiencing anthropogenic pressures. We realize that environmental degradation, poverty and food insecurity are closely related. They continue to be the major factors threatening sustainable development in the new millennium. We recognize that baseline natural resource and environmental information is key not only to addressing issues related to poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation, but only to developing operational solutions for sustainable development. But still, consistent critical information in this field is lacking at the local, national and global levels.**

**No single initiative at national, regional or international levels can effectively address the issues alone. Added value will only be generated through synergy and harmonization of various initiatives among interested stakeholders. In this regard, you represent critical members of the stakeholder community, and your collaboration is an important step towards this end.**

**It is for this reason that FAO greatly supports and is part of the Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership and is taking a leading role in the development of its themes in particular the Integrated Global Observations for Land (IGOL). FAO's commitment to this strategy is further emphasized by its hosting many global initiatives which are also part or are involved in IGOS. The Global Terrestrial Observing System and the Global Land Cover Network are just examples of these.**

**FAO also recognizes that IGOS is an ideal technical partner to the newly formed Group on Earth Observations that has the political commitment of over 50 Governments to develop timely, quality, long-term, global information, as this is the basis for sound decision-making. This can only be achieved through the creation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained observing system of which IGOS must play a key role. FAO as past co-chair of IGOS and active partner in the development of the GEO ten-year implementation plan has contributed to ensure that both initiatives work in collaborative harmony.**

**The detailed FAO activities can be seen in its website, GTOS, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org).**

**It is our hope that this workshop will provide a forum to achieve a number of key objectives, most importantly, the broad consensus among participants on the utility and importance of environmental information for both local, national and regional policy makers, whose support we hope to mobilize. We cannot overemphasize the importance and need for a coordinated effort by all stakeholders to ensure that relevant, standardized and complete information is produced and made available to the wide used community.**

**Distinguished delegates, ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you a highly successful workshop.**

**Thank you.**