

Keynote Address

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On behalf of the University of Technology, and of the Department of Fisheries in particular, I have the pleasure to welcome the distinguished scientists from Kagoshima and other Universities in Japan to our University here in Lae. And as your host we would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who devoted their time to organise this important symposium.

You are gathered here to discuss, and assess, the basic guidelines as derived from your individual researches on aquatic resources and their ecosystems. More important, I hope your deliberations at this symposium will lead to the future mounting of co-operative research programmes in the aquatic sciences, those which are of mutual interest and the findings of which will benefit the people of the pacific basin.

I am aware that in 1981 Kagoshima University established the Research Centre for South Pacific studies. Since its establishment your research teams have visited Fiji and the Solomon Islands. And, since September last year you have been negotiating with our Department of Fisheries to arrange for your visit to Papua New Guinea. I am very pleased that this has now materialised. Fourty distinguished scientists arrived here in Lae on board your University's 1,200 ton research cum training vessel "The Kagoshima Maru". Scientists in disciplines other than fisheries are not here today. However, through you let me also extend a warm welcome to them.

I had earlier mentioned "Peoples of the Pacific Basin". Please allow me to digress a bit. Papua New Guinea has an extensive coastline of some 8,300 km together with numerous offshore islands and reefs Papua New Guinea has one of the richest fisheries resources of the pacific. Added to this, all of you know that Papua New Guinea is a singatory to the law of the sea convention, we now have jurisdiction over an exclusive economic zone covering more than 1 million 8 hundred thosand square kilometers of water. These grounds again support one of the richest tuna resources of the world. As you will note, being a developing country with substantial natural resources our responsibilities to develop and manage these resources are indeed very great and heavy.

Let me proceed further by saying that the south pacific region has a population of some 5 million people. If my country, Papua New Guinea, is excluded the population shrinks to 2 million : The land area for the whole region is only 550,000 km². However, this land area is surrounded by a sea area of some 13 million km². The point of emphasis here is that the vast majority of the peoples in the south pacific, if not totally, are

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very much dependent on the surrounding seas for their day-to-day livelihood.

Thus, the resources in our coastal and distant waters are of great importance to us. We would like to know and learn how to manage these resources and allow exploitation without depletion. Additionally, we should not allow any degradation in the health of the seas that surround us. And on this point, I must, as a matter of concern digress yet again to mention that in your proceedings you must always bear in mind the concern of our people in the pacific region, that the health of our seas is in very grave danger because of the dumping of nuclear waste and nuclear testing by certain metropolitan countries and superpower rivalry, which would, in the final analysis disrupt the peaceful co-existence which the peoples of the pacific have always maintained. I beg you therefore to seriously consider these issues which are essential not only for peace in the region but more importantly for the good health of the marine resources on which our livelihood depends.

It is indeed very opportune that scientists from Japan and this university will be deliberating on their scientific findings related to aquatic resources and embark on further studies to elucidate problems concerning aquatic resources in the south pacific. The development of science and technology in recent years has been most remarkable. Its advancement could not have taken place without international exchange and co-operation. As much as the sharing of commercially important stocks and highly migratory species in the 13 million km² of water in the region is important, so is the sharing of scientific knowledge and technology between developed and developing states. To our youth, budding scientists and technologists, planners and policy administrators this is of paramount importance today. Within the terrestrial, marine, brackishwater and atmospheric confines of our country's coastal zone we aim to apply more enlightened management schemes and better control measures. Symposia and workshops of the kind as arranged today will no doubt help immensely our management and development programmes aimed at coastal and distant waters. Research and the exchange of scientific information is most essential to ensure that the resources of the vast pacific ocean is utilised in an orderly fashion to serve the peoples of the pacific and mankind as a whole and that the ocean, of which the south pacific is a part, is retained always in a state of peace and good health.

In conclusion, let me once again welcome you with our warm melanesian hospitality and greetings, wish the symposium every success, and our honoured guests from Japan a very pleasant stay in Papua New Guinea.