

## Welcome Remarks

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Dr. John Yu and members of ICGI;

Ladies and gentlemen: Good morning!

As the exciting Beijing Olympics is approaching, it gives me great pleasure to host all of you from different parts of the world in Anyang, to participate in the 2008 International Cotton Genome Initiative (ICGI) Research Conference. On behalf of China ICGI Organizing Committee and China Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) in Anyang I enthusiastically welcome all of you to this conference.

China is a major cotton-producing nation with the planting area around 5.5 million hectares. Cotton generates employment for 200 million cotton farmers and 19 million textile workers. In 2007 China exported 170 billion dollars of textile products constituting 15% of our total exports. Clearly, cotton plays an important role in China's economy.

I am pleased to note that, over the years, China Cotton Research Institute has made significant contributions to cotton production in China, among which is the development of over 60 elite cultivars. The impact of our efforts is demonstrated by the fact that over 50% of the cotton plantings use the cultivars developed by our CCRI. Our accomplishments are also reflected by the 137 National Science-technology Awards, including 4 First-grade National Science-technology Awards that we have received.

Under the national projects "973" and "863", China Cotton Research Institute together with other Chinese cotton researchers have conducted basic and applied cotton research on cotton breeding and improvement. We have made notable progress in cotton germplasm, breeding, genetics, genomics, biotechnology, and mechanization of seedling production and cultivation.

For your information, Anyang was the capital of the first dynasty of China, the Shang dynasty, and it is now one of the 7 renowned ancient capitals of China. Anyang is also where the foundation of the ancient Chinese writing, "Jiaguwen" (oracle bone inscriptions), was originated.

I am very happy today that the 2008 ICGI Research Conference is being held in Anyang. It is exciting to see many old friends and to meet many new ones. I hope that through this conference the members of the ICGI workgroups can enhance our interaction and collaboration, leading to new discoveries and developments.

I am confident that this conference will be a great success.

Thank you very much!