

Address of Welcome

Mr. B Pickering

*President, Organic Agriculture Association of South Africa,
Cape Town, South Africa*

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Today is a very important day for the agriculture sector of South Africa. We are at the opening ceremony of a very important and progressive conference, which is aiming to inform the peoples of our country of a valuable and versatile technology. Hence, I do feel that this is a significant occasion.

Agriculture of rural Africa is one beset with many problems, of which the lack of soil fertility and declining sustainability are of immediate concern. The small holder farmers strive to produce food for consumption and sale under trying conditions. Fertilizer prices are rising. Agricultural chemicals are polluting the environment and we are facing problems of waste management. These problems are not restricted to South Africa alone, but to all developing countries. The problems of waste management and pollution are also found in the developed world.

The other side of the coin is that the demand for organic food is increasing. This is a very good sign as the developing world could easily utilize this opportunity to enhance its incomes, while preserving the environments. It would also be something that rural farmers could easily adopt, given the proper support and advice.

The conference that is beginning here today is one of great significance as the concept of Kyusei Nature Farming along with the technology of Effective Microorganisms offer hope to the problems stated earlier. It is known that the technology of EM has the capacity of enhancing the productivity of organic systems, while maintaining the ecological balance of the ecosystems. The technology also is very versatile in that it uses organic wastes in a very economical manner to provide nutrients to crops. The technology as presented in Kyusei Nature Farming is also useful in animal production and pollution control. Furthermore, I have learnt that the technology is useful in mitigating problems of dioxin management, which is a growing concern in all parts of the world.

I am very confident that this conference will be very useful to us in South Africa and also to the entire continent. This is because the presentations that will be made during this conference has brought together participants from every continent, who has a significant amount of experience in the technology. It also has brought together people interested in preserving the quality of this earth for future generations. Hence, I do feel that the outcome of this conference will be of immense value to us here in this region.

On behalf of the Organic Agriculture Association of South Africa and all interested in the future of our country and region, I welcome all of you here today. I hope that you will discuss the issues at stake with care and diligence to ensure

that the deliberations of the conference will be very useful to all of you and to those from South and Southern Africa.

Please do enjoy the conference and our beautiful country - especially at this time, when the jacarandas are in bloom. This is spring - a time of hope and joy after a cold winter. Let us make the introduction of Kyusei Nature Farming and EM Technology to our country and region another spring to the organic world of South and Southern Africa.

I wish you all well and the conference all success.

Thank you.