

## WELCOME ADDRESS

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On behalf of NARESA I extend a warm welcome to all who are present distinguished invitees, resource persons and participants.

The Ministers are unable to attend because of a parliamentary meeting this morning. I am echoing their wish to promote research oriented to industry. If this country is to advance her development, we Sri Lankans have to look for ways and means to do so. It is thus the obligation of this Authority to promote research and training in that respect.

The first Biotechnology Steering Committee was installed in the latter half of last year. We lost the leadership of the late Dr O.S. Peries who was the first Chairman. Today's activity was initiated by Prof. R. Ramasamy, the present Chairman. He has also funded this workshop through a grant from UNESCO. For this, NARESA is indeed grateful.

There are various avenues through which we have to wend our way. I can think of numerous linkages between industry and NARESA. The resource persons will elaborate on this score. However there are a few important gaps such as the production of vaccines to overcome large problems like malaria, rabies and specific antivenom for snake bites, alternative sources of energy, plant tissue culture and the treatment of industrial waste. In this respect China has developed its own hepatitis B vaccine which costs about \$ 1 and is immensely cheaper than many others. We are looking for alternate sources of energy. Recently we heard that flora and fauna exports rank high in the country's list of exports. We have to support work on tissue culture.

I am personally aware of the research many of you are engaged in. However, it is industry that must interact with the scientists during discussion time. We need to know of areas of research that you in industry require and the scientists who must be trained for your needs. We also want to know how industry can help in this process of training and research for your own requirements. Would you for example be able to carve out a part of your budget for funding the type of research that we are talking about ?

Finally, I welcome you once again and invite you to participate actively in this workshop.