

Juro Saito (GEA Chair)

Opening Speech, October 16, 2009

It is a great honor to be able to hold this GEA International Conference 2009 with the attendance of H.I.H. Crown Prince Naruhito as well as the participation of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, Minister of the Environment Sakihito Ozawa, and other Japanese government ministers. On behalf of the organizers, I would like to express my sincere appreciation once again to everyone involved for their efforts to stage this conference.

At the United Nations Summit on Climate Change held last month, Prime Minister Hatoyama pledged to the international community that Japan would set the mid-term goal of reducing its CO₂ emissions by 2020 by 25 percent compared to 1990 levels. This GEA International Conference, which will be held over the next two days on the theme of “Promoting Technologies and Policies toward a Low-Carbon Society,” is sure to contribute to that ambitious undertaking.

With an eye to contributing to the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP15) to be held in Denmark in December 2009, this GEA International Conference brings together leading experts in the various related fields from Japan and overseas to engage in dynamic dialogue. Creating a low-carbon society is essentially an energy issue. Developing nations pursuing future economic growth have serious concerns that moving toward a low-carbon society will hinder the vitality of their industry. Representatives of environmental preservation groups from Asia are also participating in this conference and will offer the perspectives of developing nations.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the families of the victims of the earthquake that struck off the coast of Sumatra recently and wreaked tremendous damage in Indonesia. Allow me to express once again my sincere wishes for the prompt recovery of the stricken areas. Also, I would like to offer a special greeting to Dr. Emil Salim of Indonesia who will give the special speech today and thank him for attending this conference even though it must be a difficult time. On behalf of the organizers, I would like to extend my best wishes to all participants for a most fruitful conference.

Thank you.