

Speeches by hosts

Juro Saito

Chairman, Global Environmental Action (GEA)

Opening Ceremony, October 15, 2015

Good morning everybody. Honored by the presence of Their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Crown Princess, and by the attendance of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, it is indeed a great privilege to host this GEA International Conference here today. On behalf of the organizers, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who have devoted their energies to organizing this conference.

Abnormal weather phenomena have again been conspicuous throughout the world this year. Japan too has been struck by a record number of typhoons and by unprecedented frequent torrential rains, causing enormous damage to people's lives. I would like to express my sincere sympathy to all the people in affected areas who are, even now, struggling to rebuild their lives.

I feel that the crisis of the global environment caused by climate change is close at hand.

The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) points out that it is very likely that the main cause of global warming is due to human activity. Next month, COP21 will be held in Paris. Supposing that it is the activities of us humans that has plunged the global environment - that is the foundation of our existence - into crisis, then humanity must make every effort to avert the crisis by combining our collective wisdom. Linking this effort with concrete action is an important mission of COP21.

The theme for this year's GEA International Conference is "Policies and Measures to Cope with Climate Change and towards a Sustainable Society," that is, finding ways toward a sustainable future. Key experts active at the forefront of their respective disciplines have been invited from around the world to hold discussions with Japanese authorities in various fields. It is quite literally an international conference to "combine our collective wisdom." My hope is that the outcomes of the lively discussions to be held during this two-day conference will serve in some small way to rouse international opinion for success of COP21.

In closing, on behalf of the organizers, I would again like to express our appreciation to all participants at the conference, both from home and abroad. Thank you.

Tamayo Marukawa

Minister of the Environment, Japan

Luncheon, October 15, 2015

My name is Tamayo Marukawa and I was appointed as the Minister of the Environment in the last Cabinet reshuffle. I am 44 years old and have a three-year-old child. As a parent, I think about the future seriously, and so you are kindly requested to give me your advice.

Once again, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all today to the GEA International Conference 2015 as the Minister of the Environment.

The GEA was founded by former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita as an organization to galvanize international opinions to find solutions for global environmental issues and disseminate recommendations.

I would like to express my gratitude to members of the GEA Organizing Committee, including the Chairman Juro Saito, for their efforts in organizing this year's international conference under the theme of "Policies and Measures to Cope with Climate Change and towards a Sustainable Society."

This is a very important year to strengthen efforts worldwide to achieve climate change measures and a sustainable society.

Last month, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is international target up to 2030, was adopted at the UN Summit.

The COP21 is scheduled to be held at the end of this year.

Climate change is an important issue that must be addressed by the entire world and is an imperative task for the entire international community. We must do our best to create a new, fair, and effective international framework in which all countries must participate, including major emitters.

In closing, I hope that this conference will be fruitful and that the outcomes will be transmitted to the international community. Thank you.

Ken Saito

State Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan

Luncheon, October 15, 2015

Good afternoon, everyone. Today, I would like to extend my most sincere welcome to you all as one of the hosts of this year's GEA International Conference 2015. As a parent with high school and university-aged children, I would like to make an effort together with you all to leave a better planet for our children.

First, I would like to express my deepest respect to all who actively offer guidance and take action daily in order to pass on a clean global environment to future generations, where people around the world can enjoy healthy and prosperous lives.

I also think that is very meaningful to have the participation of so many people and to hold discussions on the theme of "Policies and Measures to Cope with Climate Change and towards a Sustainable Society" at this conference on major milestones towards the upcoming COP21 in Paris.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is also focusing its efforts into the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted at the UN Summit late last month, and the achievement of the post-2020 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, aiming at agreement at COP21, which will be held in Paris next month.

The Ministry would like to continue to work on promoting international cooperation in the food and agricultural sectors, and steadily promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and the food industry, as well as measures for forest sinks, and the introduction of renewable energies in rural areas.

We would like to continue to faithfully implement a plan that was developed in August of this year on adaptation to the impacts of climate change in agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector. In order to create a sustainable and beautiful Earth, we hope to have active discussions on climate change measures and the realization of sustainable societies in the sessions following the luncheon.

In closing, I hope you will enjoy today's lunch, which includes a variety of delicious agricultural products of Japan, and consider publicizing these delicious foods in your own countries. Thank you.

Masakazu Hamachi

Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

Welcome Reception hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 15, 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honor to welcome the distinguished participants of the GEA International Conference 2015 from all over the world to Japan.

The year 2015 marks a significant milestone for global environmental issues, including both climate change and sustainable development. Last month the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in New York. And from the end of November, the COP21 will be held in Paris, where a new international framework on climate change will be discussed.

Bearing this in mind, I am convinced that the theme of today's Conference, "Measures to tackle Climate Change and towards a Sustainable Society" is very timely and will lead to a fruitful discussion on the future of our planet.

The 2030 Agenda is a historical document that crystalizes our long efforts towards realizing sustainable development. The new Agenda has laid at its core five key elements, called the five 'P's: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. It has also forged an ambitious plan of action covering various fields including women, health, education, disaster risk reduction, and quality growth, all of which Japan has been emphasizing. With these core components, the new Agenda will lead our efforts to ultimately eradicate poverty from the Earth and to transform this planet into a sustainable one by 2030.

In order to address climate change effectively, the entirety international community is called to work together. For its part, Japan is determined to contribute to the adoption of a new international framework at COP21 which is fair, effective and applicable to all Parties.

From 2013 to 2014, Japan provided approximately 20 billion dollars to developing countries from both public and private sources for climate change mitigation and adaptation. In May of this year, Japan and the Green Climate Fund signed a contribution arrangement confirming the conversion of Japan's pledge of 1.5 billion dollars to the fund.

Distinguished guests, the attendants of GEA International Conference 2015 are rich in experience and have expertise in many fields that are integral to the world's sustainable development. The Government of Japan is of the view that we should unite our effort to build a new global partnership, where all parties involved including Governments, the business community, academic community, and NGOs come together to work for the future of global environment. While benefitting from your expertise, our government will make further efforts in cooperation with the international society to find answers to the issues currently faced by the world. Thank you very much for your attention.

Junzo Yamamoto

State Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan

Luncheon, October 16, 2015

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Junzo Yamamoto and I am the State Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. First, I would like to sincerely welcome all of you who have gathered here from around Japan and abroad for this year's GEA International Conference 2015. And I would like to express my appreciation to everyone involved in the preparation for this conference, including members of the Global Environmental Action.

The mission of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is to create hardware and software infrastructures in order to be able to achieve a vibrant economy and society to support the dynamic lives of people, guarantee daily security, create and maintain a good environment, and bring diversity to districts. We have taken various measures in the environment sector to achieve a low-carbon, naturally symbiotic, and recycling-oriented society.

CO₂ emissions from sectors related to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, such as the transportation, housing, and building sectors, account for about 50% of all emissions in the entire country. For this reason, we are actively involved in the development and promotion of fuel-efficient and environmentally-friendly vehicles, improvement of energy efficiency in houses and buildings, and the promotion of low-carbon urban development through the integration of urban functions, in order to achieve the creation of a low-carbon society.

Based on the international consensus that the impacts from climate change are inevitable even with steps taken to fully implement CO₂ emission reduction, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is taking steps to implement necessary measures, such as disaster prevention measures for natural disasters and frequent droughts for which impacts are a concern. The Ministry is also developing climate change adaptation plans together with the entire government, in order to strategically promote adaptation measures, including monitoring and research on climate change.

I hope that this year's GEA International Conference 2015 will greatly contribute to the sustainable future of our planet through the lively discussions of experts on global environmental issues from Japan and overseas. Thank you.

Tsuneo Kitamura

Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan

Luncheon, October 16, 2015

My name is Tsuneo Kitamura and I am the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. I would like to thank you for your participation in today's GEA International Conference. And I would like to show my respect for GEA's many years of contributions and achievements towards the compatibility between solutions for global environmental issues and the difficult issues of sustainable development.

COP21 will be held at the end of this year. We expect that COP21 will be the time when a consensus is reached on a new, fair, and effective framework with the participation of all major countries. With the submission of reduction targets by about 150 countries and regions, including Japan, there is a growing momentum for agreement in Paris.

We have advocated a system for many years, in which targets that have been set voluntarily by each country are reviewed internationally. That the world is increasingly embracing this system is the result of negotiations, and also serves the national interests of Japan.

Technology has become the key for drastic solutions to climate change issues. A major shift to a low-carbon society has become essential for the entire world through the development and dissemination of innovative technologies in the energy and environmental sectors.

An international conference, "Innovation for Cool Earth Forum" (ICEF), was founded last year as a platform for industry, academia, and government leaders of the world to conduct discussions to promote innovation. About 1,000 people from 70 countries gathered together at the second annual meeting, which was held last week.

Exceptional low-carbon technologies have also been disseminated to developing countries with the promotion of the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), which has been expanded to 15 partner countries.

Finally, I hope that the GEA International Conference will play an important role in boosting the momentum towards COP21, achieving climate change measures, and realizing a sustainable society. Thank you.

Yoshio Yatsu

Advisor, GEA/ Former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan

Reception hosted by GEA, October 16, 2015

Good evening. My name is Yoshio Yatsu and I serve as an advisor of GEA, together with Mr. Hiroshi Ohki.

First, I would like to thank all the official participants and staff in attendance at this reception, as well as those who took on the tremendous task of providing simultaneous interpretation at this international conference.

I believe that we have achieved significant results during the discussions over these past two days.

The theme of this year's international conference was "Policies and Measures to Cope with Climate Change and towards a Sustainable Society". I would like to thank the distinguished participants from various areas of expertise for their attendance and advices on many different aspects.

The Industrial Revolution, which occurred from the mid-18th century, took place under the principle of economy first. In the result, we found the environment of the earth, the basis of our livelihood, had become polluted. Today, we all have a sense of apprehension about this crisis, and I am very pleased that we have been able to hold meaningful discussions on this issue both yesterday and today.

However, the current situation has been created by human beings, and I am confident that it can be solved by the power of humanity.

Every participant offered useful suggestions and opinions during this conference. I think we must use this opportunity to mobilize these ideas to create a secure foundation to continue our efforts in the future. You are kindly requested to give us your advices.

It is my hope that the wisdom of the human race will be mobilized at COP21. I think it is important for us to continue driving our ideas and make a move to action with your guidance in the future. Thank you.

Mayuko Toyota

Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan

Reception hosted by GEA, October 16, 2015

Good evening, everyone. My name is Mayuko Toyota and I am the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. I would like to say a few words on behalf of the Ministry.

I am truly pleased that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology was able to take part in the successful organization of the GEA International Conference over the past two days as a host. I would like to express my appreciation to the distinguished attendees from Japan and overseas that came from afar to take part in this conference, as well as the GEA Secretariat, related stakeholders, and the Organizing Committee, including Chairman Juro Saito and Director General Wakako Hironaka, for their efforts in organizing this conference. Thank you for your support in making this conference a great success.

Enthusiastic discussions have taken place at this year's GEA International Conference on climate change and sustainable growth of this earth. Needless to say, the issues of climate change and global warming, which have been identified as targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in September of this year, are one of the most important global issues to be addressed.

We will continue to respond to the various projected threats resulting from climate change, and science and technology are being asked to play an important role in responding to these threats. I believe it is of the utmost importance for people from different fields, including academia and industry, to come together to achieve the concept of "science in society, and science for society," and to have scientists and stakeholders in society come together to solve these issues by mobilizing the power of science in various fields.

Based on the suggestions presented over the two days at the GEA International Conference, it will be possible to develop the energy-saving technologies needed to adapt to global warming and reduce greenhouse gases, as well as enable highly accurate satellite and marine observations. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology would like to contribute to the achievement of a sustainable society through cutting-edge climate change measures with the development of global observation technologies, generation of scientific and technological innovation through the utilization of this observation data, and proactive implementation in society.

Earlier, Mr. Yatsu said that problems caused by human being can be solved by mobilizing their wisdom and power. On the basis of this belief, I hope that this meeting and the future activities of you all will play an active role in the realization of a sustainable future for our children. I would like to extend my best wishes for the health and success of all gathered here today and your families. I would also like to join hands with you all in the creation of a bright future for the human race. Thank you very much for your hard work. Thank you.