

**International Expert Meeting on the Development and
Implementation of National Codes of Practice for Forest Harvesting.**

Opening Ceremony Greetings by Vice Governor Otsuki

Good morning everybody. And welcome to Chiba Prefecture.

It is an honor to have you all here, from all around the country, and the world. It is my pleasure to officially open, the 'International Expert Meeting for Forest Harvesting'.

I would like to talk to you a little about Chiba Prefecture. Chiba lies in the middle of Japan. We are lucky to have a warm climate, plenty of beautiful greenery, rivers, forests, and the ocean by our side. Nature plays a very important part, in the culture and lifestyle of Chiba's people.

About 400 years ago in the Edo period, Tokyo was made the capital of Japan. Being right next to Tokyo, Chiba has supplied the capital with food and fuel, from our active fishing, water and forest industries.

In recent years, Chiba has seen very fast growth, and development. We have become urbanized. We are home to Narita International Airport in Narita, as well as the modern Makuhari New City Area. We also have top class technology at Kazusa Akademia Park, where we are now. In many ways, we have become very modern both economically, and internationally. This was especially true, when Chiba's population reached 6 million, in September last year.

However, behind this fast economic growth, our forests have been neglected. We have made use of our forests in a damaging way, and I worry about the effect this has had on our resources.

I think that the whole world is experiencing the same problem. We all share serious concerns of global warming, the erosion of the ozone layer, deforestation, the extinction of animals, and desertification. I think that our forests are the key, to solving most of these problems. The most important thing that we can do, to help the environment, is to become aware of our situation.

In May this year, Chiba Prefecture held the '54th National Arbor Day', here in the Main Hall, at Kazusa Akademia Park. National Arbor Day began in 1950, just after the Second World War. Japan was in a state of ruin, and Arbor Day was started, in an effort to revive the forests and nature of Japan. In 1953, Chiba hosted the 4th Arbor Day, with the theme of 'coastal sand dune a-forestation'. This year was our second time after 50 years, to host the gathering. This year's theme, focused on Japan's 'Satoyama'. To directly translate 'Satoyama' into English, 'sato' means 'village', and 'yama' means 'mountain'. Basically it means 'nature close to home'. 'Satoyama' are the mountains and native areas, Japanese people live in and around. It is our hope to protect these areas, and to make people aware of 'Satoyama's' role, in our daily lives.

Arbor Day was also a special day for Chiba, because we declared that day to be 'Satoyama Day'. Both of these days are very important, in deepening the relationship people have, with nature. I want the people of Chiba, to become aware of how our forests are a valuable resource. I want the people to work together with NPO's, industries and government organizations, to protect this nature, for the next generation. 'Satoyama Day' is a great starting point, for

these efforts.

This year has been an important year for Chiba, to make a new approach, in dealing with our forests, and the forest industry. That's why it is such an honor to co-host this meeting, with the Forest Agency, as a part of International Cooperation.

The main theme for this meeting, is the 'development and implementation of national codes of practice, for forest harvesting'. I'm sure that much will come of the discussion of this theme, at today's symposium. I also heard, that you will all be taking a field trip tomorrow. The plan is that for part of the day, we will show you progress of our research in high performance forest machinery. We are trying to introduce these machines for low impact, low cost logging. You will also be shown some of our areas of coastal sand dune a-forestation. During the day, you will also have the chance, to hear about the history, use and re-generation of the Kazusa area's 'broad-leaf forests', which are famous all around Japan. I hope that these themes, will help you all in your planning and policies of forest industry's, in your own countries.

I truly hope that the symposium and your field trip, is beneficial for all of you. I am sure that this meeting will be very successful. Hopefully, you can all come back to Chiba when you have more time, and do some sightseeing at a slower pace.

Please enjoy your stay in Chiba.

Thank you very much.