

## Organizer's Opening Address for the International Seminar on Goho-Wood 2012

As just introduced, my name is Motoaki Okuma.

Let me express my gratitude to all of you for gathering here from early in the morning to attend today's International Seminar on Goho-Wood 2012.

Today in particular, we have many participants, including five guest commentators from overseas. On behalf of the organizer, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome and appreciation to all of you.

In Japan, efforts to establish and disseminate a supply system for legality-verified wood, which we call "*goho*-wood," based on Forest Agency guidelines, have been made mainly by related industry groups in order to respond to international trends, in terms of measures to control illegal logging, strengthen the Forest Act, and promote trade. This system, in which the wood's legality and other information about wood and wood products are conveyed to consumers through a series of certificates issued by member companies authorized by related industry groups following a specific procedure, has widely spread throughout Japan.

We believe that this activity, viewed worldwide as Japan's commitment to *goho*-wood, has the potential of becoming a global standard, rather than only remaining that of Japan. Today's schedule follows a meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), which ended yesterday, and I expect that this seminar will provide a good opportunity for those from overseas involved in the Organization to expand their wisdom and discuss future prospects.

In Part 1 in the morning, a speech by Executive Director Akihiko Araya of the Forest Economic Research Institute is scheduled where reports will be made from various angles on Japan's efforts to verify the legality of woods, which are aimed at the illegal logging issue. In Part 2 in the afternoon, with Chief Takeshi Toma of the Partnership Promotion Office of the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute presiding as Chair, participants, including overseas guests, will hold a discussion under the theme "The significance of and problems in Japan's verification of the legality of wood and wood products, from an international perspective." I am very happy both excellent Japanese leading forestry economist and scientist kindly take the role of coordinators of this seminar.

My specialty is the processing and utilization of wood. I would like to voice my personal opinion from the perspective of my specialty. The purpose of people who

utilize wood is to create good products and build good houses. To this end, top priority must be placed on securing wood as a raw material whose quality and performance has been verified. However, Goho-Wood and Certified Forest Products are not products whose quality has been guaranteed. So, I believe that cooperation is needed with such systems as the Japan Agricultural Standards (JAS) that define quality.

In other words, lumber and wood products, unlike industrial products such as steel and plastics, are biological resources that are produced naturally in a forest. When considering our close relationship with forests and their environmental preservation, we should be deeply aware that wood products are special products that need to be properly judged through a comprehensive evaluation that incorporates evaluations of legality, performance of environmental preservation, and resource sustainability, in addition to quality assurance.

The production and utilization of wood is positioned as a basic system for sustainably securing and utilizing resources that supports the 21st century. I believe that in the course of establishing such a system, our efforts related to *goho*-wood will play an important role.

We would appreciate it if you recognize the significance of our efforts related to *goho*-wood from a global perspective and express your candid opinions, which will be incorporated into our efforts related to *goho*-wood.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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