

Opening Address from Organizer

December 10, 2009

Thank you for coming despite such early hours for the 2009 Symposium on the Promotion of Wood and Wood Products with Verified Legality. I would also like to thank our guest of honor, Director General Taisuke Shimada of the Forestry Agency, for taking the time from his busy schedule to be here with us. Our keynote speaker, Dato' Dr. B.C.Y. Freezailah, has also made time for this event in his demanding calendar and traveled a long way, for which we are very grateful.

It has been four years since Japan's wood industry launched serious efforts against international illegal logging, and this is our 4th symposium with international participants. In the first three symposia, the main focus was on sharing Japan's domestic efforts with parties from abroad, with a view towards smoothing the way for certified wood into the Japanese market, thereby becoming a part of the solution in the exporting nations' struggle against the problem of illegal logging. At the roundtable meeting with GLOBE International members prior to last year's G8 Summit, we were honored to be told that Japan's efforts were those for goho-wood (legal wood) everywhere.

The focus of today's symposium is on how to share these efforts with Japanese consumers, and communicate the importance of anti-illegal logging measures in protecting the global environment, and the significance of using wood and wood products with verified legality, with as many of these consumers as possible.

The first session of this Symposium will honor the individuals who have worked to supply and popularize the Japanese wood and wood products with verified legality. I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to all those being honored today. The Keynote Address in the second session will be given by Dr. Freezailah, the former Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization. The lecture entitled "International Measures Against Illegal Logging and Goho-Wood Activities Conducted by Japan" is a perfect match for the intent of this Symposium. The third session consists of panel discussions in two parts. Part 1 focuses on wood products in exporting countries and the goho-wood supply network, and part 2 will examine the issues and prospects toward the promotion of the use of goho-wood in the Japanese market.

There is a lot of content to cover, but we are excited by the prospect of adding to your understanding of our goho-wood efforts over the last four years, and of taking another great step towards promulgation of wood and wood products with verified legality.

Thank you again for being here today. With your enthusiastic participation, I feel certain that this Symposium will be a success.

Hideo Namiki
President of Japan Federation of Wood Industry Associations