

Address by  
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International Symposium on Legality Verified Wood 2010

Friday, December 10, 2010  
TFT Hall (Ariake, Koto Ward)

I extend to you my heartfelt congratulations on successfully holding the International Symposium on Legality Verified Wood 2010.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all participants for your understanding and cooperation in the promotion of forestry administration. It is my great pleasure to note the presence of many distinguished guests. From Indonesia, we have with us Dr. Muhamand Firman, Director of Forest Product Processing and Marketing of Ministry of Forestry, and 31 other participants representing the Ministry of Forestry and the forestry industry of Indonesia. From the State of Sarawak in Malaysia, we have here with us 13 representatives of government agencies and the forestry industry. Other guests in this symposium include participants from the United States, China, and Europe.

As you well know, the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 16) is currently taking place in Mexico. Forestry related issues constitute one of the important subjects of the Conference, with special emphasis on the pressing question of how to cope with deforestation in developing countries from the perspective of climate change.

Illegal logging is one of the factors directly contributing to deforestation and forest degradation. Not only does illegal logging damage the forest ecosystem but it is also widely acknowledged to pose a major challenge to maintaining biodiversity and pursuing sustainable forestry management.

Yet another problem of illegal logging is that it supplies wood to the international markets at unfairly low prices that do not properly reflect costs. This upsets the distribution of wood in Japan and other wood consuming countries, raising fears of a seriously negative impact on forestry and forestry industries.

Reflecting its adherence to the basic principle that “We will not use illegally logged wood,” Japan has taken positive action against illegal logging. For instance, based on the provisions of the Law on Promoting Green Purchasing, in fiscal 2000 Japan introduced measures mandating government procurement of legality and sustainability verified wood and

wood products. Considerable progress has been made in related areas. A system has been developed for supplying “Gohowood,” or legality verified wood, with approximately 7,700 businesses throughout Japan currently participating.

Based on the Joint Announcement and Action Plan concerning countermeasures to illegal logging signed by Japan and Indonesia in 2003, our two countries are working jointly to develop various technologies, such as a wood tracking system.

During this symposium, I understand that various presentations will be given on programs being implemented in Japan, as well as presentations on initiatives being pursued by such wood producing countries as Indonesia and Malaysia, and by such wood consuming countries as the European Union and the United States.

I believe this symposium provides an excellent opportunity for all participants to share information on countermeasures to illegal logging in Japan and other countries. It is my most earnest hope that this gathering and sharing of information will add greater momentum to activities aimed at eliminating illegally logged wood from the markets of the world.

The United Nations has designated 2011 as the International Year of Forests. We welcome this designation as a valuable opportunity to raise global awareness of the importance of sustainable forestry management and preservation. We also look forward to the International Year of Forests to inform the people of Japan and the rest of the world of our undertakings aimed at rehabilitating Japan’s forests and forestry industry.

I would like to conclude my remarks by extending to you my best wishes for the success of everyone gathered here today and to request the continued cooperation of all participants in promoting countermeasures to illegal logging.

Thank you.