

# Opening Remarks

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Distinguished delegates from Asian countries, experts, and participants,

Good Morning.

It is a great honor for me to make these opening remarks at this important EST Forum, on behalf of the Government of Japan.

First of all, as one of the organizers, it is a great honor and my personal pleasure to welcome all the delegates, experts and participants to the Third Regional EST Forum in Asia. In addition, I would like to extend my special thanks to Mr. Onogawa, director of UNCRD for his strong leadership in developing this EST Forum and at the same time to the Singapore Government for its acceptance to organize this 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum.

This Forum has been well developed since its establishment in 2005. Founded by the adoption of the “Aichi Statement” in Nagoya, Japan, 14 countries gathered in Yogyakarta, Indonesia for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum in 2006, and now we are here in Singapore today for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum. In 2007, the “Asian Mayors’ Policy Dialogue for the Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Transport in Cities” was held in Kyoto, as a pre-event to the Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the “Kyoto Declaration,” was drawn up and adopted in order to recognize the importance of achieving synergy between local and national strategies to realize EST. As this Forum has gradually expanded, we can now welcome new delegates from 8 South Asian countries. I am indeed delighted to announce the successful expansion and consolidation of the Asian EST network.

Here in Singapore, the East Asia Summit was held in November, last year and the “Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment” was adopted. The Regional EST Forum in Asia was mentioned and highly appraised in this declaration. I believe this shows that the international community including the leaders of Asian Countries have highly evaluated our efforts and activities.

The Singapore Declaration clearly shows the importance of cooperation in dealing with climate change, energy, and the environment. I would like to express my great appreciation to the Singapore Government for its strong leadership in adopting the declaration as the host country and for its accomplishment in promoting this Forum and its related activities. I recognize that at the beginning of this year, the Singapore Government launched a new road map that will guide land transport developments over the next 10-15 years. And this dynamic strategy includes the enhancement of Electric Road Pricing and the public transport system.

In this context, I would like to share some important points regarding the current environmental policies underway in Japan. In June of last year, the “National Environmental Strategy in the 21st Century” was launched. This strategy will determine the orientation of environmental policies to be pursued both in Japan and internationally, and serves as a guideline for Japan’s contribution to formulating a future global framework. One of the main pillars of this strategy is international cooperation. The Asian Region is of particular importance and we are advocating the “Clean Asia Initiative” to minimize environmental pollution. To realize this, Japan will make full use of all its experience and know-how, including its environmental and energy-related technologies to overcome the problem of pollution. And also, Japan will continue promoting EST in the Asian Region. Furthermore Japan will implement “Co-Benefit approaches” for synergetic and integrated measure to combat pollution and problems resulting from global warming.

In January this year, Prime Minister Fukuda pointed out that the most serious challenge to humankind in the 21st century is climate change. And he expressed his decision that Japan will contribute to the international community by transforming itself into a “low carbon society” and also contribute in personnel and technological terms to address common challenges, such as assistance to developing countries, countermeasures against environmental damage, and the development of advanced technology.

The Government of Japan has noted that the Regional EST Forum in Asia is a very important vehicle to address the common environment and transport issues of our region in an effective manner. This is why our Government has supported the activities of this Forum since its initial phase. I am pleased to make my pledge that the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan would like to commit itself to continuing its support for this Forum and its related activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish you the most active participation and discussions throughout this three-day Forum and I will conclude my remarks by wishing you all a successful and productive meeting. Thank you.