

Japan-East Asia Dialogue on “Cooperation in Environment and Energy”

10 June, 2008, Tokyo

Opening Remarks by ITO Kenichi President, Global Forum of Japan

Mr. Simon Tay, Prof. Hirono Ryokichi, other distinguished panelists and all other participants in the floor, particularly those from ASEAN nations, China and Korea, on behalf of the Global Forum of Japan, which is the host of this “Dialogue” between Japan and the rest of East Asia on “Cooperation in Environment and Energy,” I would like to welcome you all and thank you in advance for your contributions to the success of this conference.

Needless to say, the environmental issue is at the top of the list of challenges the humanity faces today. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made it clear that it is not natural variations but human emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) that are warming the planet’s surface. The Bali Action Plan of the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP 13) is one of the milestones in the process of the negotiations on the post-2012 agreement. The G8 Summit to be held in Japan this year will focus on the issue of environment.

To tell the truth, the Global Forum of Japan and its sister organization, Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), have been paying much attention to this issue since many years ago. Already in October 2001 JFIR announced a set of policy recommendations on “Japan’s New Initiative for Global Environment” to be followed by another set of policy recommendations on “The Establishment of an International Energy Security System” in May 2006.

As for the Global Forum of Japan, “The Japan-China Dialogue” which it hosted in January 2007 was on the topic of “The Japan-China Relationship and Energy and Environmental Issues” and the Session II of “The 6th Japan-ASEAN Dialogue” held in July 2007 in Tokyo was on the topic of “The Japan-ASEAN Cooperation in Energy and Environmental Issues.”

Therefore, it should be noted that today’s meeting on “Japan and East Asia on Cooperation in Environment and Energy” comes not as a surprise but as a culmination of the efforts of many people who have contributed to the process introduced above. Hoping for fruitful exchanges today, let me now conclude my opening remarks. Thank you.