

Message from the Governor of Tokyo

Forward

Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong, Minister Mentor, Lee Kuan Yew, and the leaders of metropolis of Asia, I am the governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara.

The "East Asia Summit Conference on Liveable Cities 2008" is an extremely noteworthy conference promoting teamwork among the cities of Asia and allowing them to work together towards the goal of realizing cities which exist in harmony with the environment. Allow me to express my utmost admiration to the Singaporean Government for taking the initiative in holding this conference.

Critical Environmental Issues

The earth is presently in a critical state, facing many serious environmental issues, including global warming. While being a driving force behind the development of civilization, cities, where the majority of the world population resides, are also consumers of vast quantities of resources and energy and are becoming a heavy burden on the global environment.

The accumulated load on this planet is already approaching a critical point, and the actions of cities that are burdening the environment are coming into question.

Two Targets for "Tokyo's Big Change: The 10-year Plan"

In Tokyo, we have taken the initiative ahead of the national government and implemented our own regulations on diesel vehicle emissions achieving a momentous improvement in the quality of Tokyo's air, as well as creating approximately 90 hectares of new greenery inside the metropolis through the compulsory greening of new construction project rooftops. For quite some time already we have been supplying world-renowned safe and superior quality tap water to much of the metropolis which has been made possible through our advanced water treatment technology. In "Tokyo's Big Change: The 10-year Plan", our urban development strategy for Tokyo's near future, we have included 2 goals which have "environment" as the keyword.

Cities with Low Environmental Burdens

One of the goals is to "Realize a city model with the lowest environmental burden in the world." By 2020 we aim to "reduce Tokyo's greenhouse gas emissions by 25% from their 2000 levels," A bill to be resolved by the current session of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly is calling for a emission trading scheme and a mandatory cap on large emitters to reduce their emissions. This will be the world's first emission reduction scheme that also targets office buildings that abound in large cities. Furthermore, Tokyo is now participating in the "International Carbon Action Partnership (ICAP)" and presenting our new cap and trading scheme to the world.

In addition, we will establish a system to purchase the environmental value of solar energy, with the aim of increasing the use of solar energy to approximately 1 million kilowatts through the promotion and distribution of solar generated power and solar powered devices.

We are also contributing to the world by sharing many of our innovative water management methods such as advanced wastewater reclamation technology and our outstanding water supply technology which has an extremely low leakage rate of approximately 3%.

Beautiful City of Water and Greenery

The other goal is to “restore Tokyo’s beauty as a city of water and greenery” For that purpose we have embarked upon a project to transform reclaimed land in Tokyo bay made of waste and soil from construction sites into 88 hectares of abundant natural greenery, to be known as "Umi-no-Mori(green island)". And we are doubling the number of roadside trees in the metropolis to one million. Additionally a thousand hectares of new greenery will be created by greening up rooftops and refurbishing city parks helping us realize a comfortable Tokyo overflowing with greenery and where cool ocean breezes blow.

Cooperation with Global Cities

Environment issues, including global warming, need to be urgently dealt with on a global scale. Particularly in Asia, which is becoming one of the world's axis, there is extremely great significance for large cities, which have the power to lead their countries, to come together in mutual cooperation to solve the challenges, including environmental ones, that they are all facing.

The Task of Asian Network of Major Cities 21

Due to the abovementioned circumstances, I established the Asian Network of Major Cities 21 in 2001. In this association, 11 large Asian cities including Singapore and Tokyo are jointly attempting to resolve common issues generated by big cities through various initiatives which focus on the environment, crisis management, and industrial promotion among other areas. Regarding the environment, we are making efforts in areas that deal with automobile emission countermeasures, global warming and the education of human resources.

C40 Tokyo Conference on Climate Change

This October, cities participating in "The Large Cities Climate Leadership Group: C40" and the member executives of the Asian Network of Major Cities 21 are invited to Tokyo to the C40 Tokyo Conference on Climate Change. With expertise and a mutual sense of crisis, we will study measures against the heat-island phenomena, drought, and other severities which are occurring frequently right before our very eyes.

Actualization of 2016 Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic Games

On June the 4th Tokyo was selected as a candidate city for 2016 Summer Olympic/Paralympic Games. The IOC gave Tokyo high marks in its assessment of the city’s environmental conditions and policy.

As a representative of Asia, Tokyo wishes to set an example as a 21st century city with advanced environmental awareness.

We will continue to steadfastly implement advanced measures in line with our objective “hosting a Games which nurture people, protect greenery and revitalize cities”. Tokyo is the sole Asian candidate and your kind support towards the realization of a 2016 Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic Games would be appreciated.

The Tokyo 2016 bid logo is an ornamental cord called MIZUHIKI which takes the form of traditional Japanese knot, known in Japan as MUSUBI. And it is my intention to realize this symbolism by tying the city to the environment and Japan to the world.

Conclusion

Lastly, I believe that through this conference a lot of wisdom and enthusiasm that ties cities to the environment has been shared by all the participants. I hope that the efforts of each city and the cooperation between them will be intensified further as a result of this conference.