

## Welcoming Remarks

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## Welcoming Remarks

Alphonse Kambu  
Director  
Ishikawa International Cooperation Research Centre (IICRC)



It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the 4<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on environmental issues affecting the Pan-Japan Sea region. The Ishikawa International Cooperation Research Centre (IICRC) is delighted to co-organize again the International Symposium with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century COE Program of Kanazawa University this year.

The IICRC is one of the Special Programmes of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS). It was created jointly by the United Nations University (UNU), the Ishikawa Prefectural Government and the Kanazawa City Government in 1996 to implement joint projects with the intention to contribute to the efforts of UNU on sustainable development and international cooperation. IICRC currently conducts analytical research on a number of local, regional and global environmental issues. In this regard the International Symposium on environmental issues concerning the Pan-Japan Sea region is timely and of interest to IICRC.

The saying “environmental pollution knows no political or geographical borders” fits nicely in the context of the Pan-Japan Sea region. Pollutants emitted or discharged in one jurisdiction in the Pan-Japan Sea region crosses into jurisdictions of other countries causing burdens to those receiving the pollutants. The cross-border environmental issues in the region are prompted also by the physical and geographical features of the Pan-Japan Sea region. For instance, its closed sea allows little room for the flow and natural cleansing of marine pollution. Also, the movement of water and air currents causes pollutants to move from one country to another. This situation requires the countries of the region to take measures individually and collectively to address the problem at their sources. To be able to move from rhetoric to action, countries of the region require up-to-date and accurate scientific information which must be exchanged among each other to raise awareness while at the same time formulate policies and strategies to address the common problem. I hope that the opportunity through this symposium can further serve to facilitate this need. With these few words I would like to welcome you again and wish you a fruitful symposium.

Thank you very much.