

May 23, 2011

## **Inauguration Address by Chairman Mori**

Thanks to your recommendation, I have just been appointed as Chairman of the Kansai Economic Federation (Kankeiren).

Succeeding the office of Chairman at this time, when Japan is struggling with the aftermath of an unprecedented disaster, the Great East Japan Earthquake, I feel I bear a huge responsibility. I am determined to do whatever I can for the Kansai region, and for Japan as a whole. In these endeavors, I would appreciate your generous support and cooperation.

Mr. Shimozuma, the former chairman of Kankeiren, exerted his exceptional leadership in tackling a series of great challenges that occurred in quick succession following the Lehman Brothers' collapse. I am grateful that amid that difficult environment, he guided us in the right direction.

Mr. Shimozuma clearly indicated the future path that the Kansai region should take in the report "Kansai Vision 2020," compiled in 2008. In this report, he suggested our future path using various slogans, such as "Kansai: an Environmentally Advanced Region" and "Harmonious Relationships with Asian Countries." Mr. Shimozuma was also committed to organizational reforms of regional economic circles, most notably the integration of Kankeiren and the Kansai Employers' Association.

Immediately after the Great East Japan Earthquake, he announced the resolution that the Kansai region would support the afflicted areas and Japan as a whole. In line with that resolution, he formed the Special Committee on Emergency Disaster Response and Support so as to launch various reconstruction and recovery programs. As a leader of the Kansai region, he took timely and relevant initiatives.

I will continue to take the path paved by Mr. Shimozuma, and will work to extend it in the direction he has suggested. I take this opportunity to solicit Mr. Shimozuma for his continual support and advice.

Looking back over the history of Kankeiren, it was established in October 1946, amid the post-war turmoil in which Japan was mired. The purpose of its establishment was to help the Japanese economy rise again from the ashes. In the subsequent decades, Kankeiren contributed greatly to the remarkable growth of the Japanese economy, as well as that of the Kansai region.

This most recent disaster reminds us that we should once again review the efforts and achievements of our predecessors. It is time for us to return to the starting point of our organization and exert whatever power we have in order to restore the afflicted areas and revitalize the Japanese economy.

I believe many of you were deeply impressed by the recent visits of Their Imperial Majesties, the Emperor and the Empress, to the afflicted areas. Their compassionate approach to the victims and thoughtful words of encouragement for them truly inspired us to work for the reconstruction of the afflicted areas. Indeed, Their Majesties showed deep compassion and empathy, which awakened the spirit of mutual aid that we, the Japanese people, have long embraced deep in our hearts. It is my sincere hope that driven by this spirit, we can promote reconstruction programs dynamically and powerfully.

Since economic activities remain slow in East Japan, all enterprises in West Japan must combine efforts to support East Japan. In this context, the Kansai region should play the leading role, taking advantage of the wealth of our experience in reviving our own region from the damage of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

Residents of the Kansai region should never forget the kind support and assistance rendered from other parts of Japan and the rest of the world at the time of that disaster, 16 years ago. It is therefore our turn to assist the people in the current afflicted areas. After listening to the victims' voices, we will decide the priorities of initiatives to take, and carry out them in a speedy manner.

In collaboration with other organizations, our Special Committee on Emergency Disaster Response and Support has already issued its first proposal regarding the reconstruction of the afflicted areas. Members of the special committee have inspected the afflicted areas and held discussions with the local residents concerned.

Moreover, the West Japan Economic Council (Nishikeikyo), to which the Kankeiren belongs, organized the Nishikeikyo Team for Recovery Assistance. The Nishikeikyo has also compiled a proposal concerning the immediate reconstruction and subsequent recovery of the afflicted areas. In addition, the Council is promoting the BUY Tohoku Campaign, aimed at the sales promotion of items produced in the Tohoku region.

On the basis of these proposals, Kankeiren will take additional reconstruction initiatives: to restore the shredded supply chain, to minimize the negative impacts of harmful rumors, and to encourage former overseas residents who left Japan in the wake of the disaster to return. In the subsequent recovery stage, in addition to offering proposals on nation rebuilding, we at Kankeiren hope to work with residents in the afflicted areas in implementing various recovery projects.

In parallel with these reconstruction and recovery projects, Kankeiren will work to innovate local industries and to promote Kansai's attractive features. This is imperative in order to enhance the competitiveness of Japan and the Kansai region against the backdrop of advanced globalization and the rise of many emerging economies.

Moreover, I will make steady efforts to fulfill various tasks, including the enhancement of Japan's competitiveness and preparedness for entering into the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the development of human resources with global perspectives, reinforcement of the functions of Kansai International Airport as an Asian hub airport, the linking of strategic roads in the Kansai region, promotion of the Knowledge Capital project in the Osaka Station North District, and the implementation of a roadmap entitled a "Vision for Kansai's Industrial Future," compiled by the Union of Kansai Governments.

All these efforts will be made not only for the Kansai region but also for Japan as a whole. We hope to assist in the nation rebuilding, aligning our efforts with the policies set forth in the Vision on Countermeasures for the Great East Japan Earthquake, prepared by the national government.

I am well aware that all the items I have thus far mentioned must be carried out thoroughly and completely. It is imperative that we continue the programs and projects that I have mentioned until they bring forth favorable results. To this end, we must seek cooperation from other organizations that have their original and unique strengths.

Together with Kansai Association of Corporate Executives and chambers of commerce and industry, which share with us the vision to work for the development of the Kansai region and Japan at large, Kankeiren will combine the strengths of all Kansai-based organizations, so as to enhance our influence and power to realize the policies we propose. To this end, we will work to strengthen our partnerships with other organizations.

In addition, we will work to strengthen our partnerships with the Asia Pacific Institute, the Pacific Resource Exchange Center, Osaka Science & Technology Center, and other related organizations so as to enhance the synergy of our respective efforts.

Earlier in this address, I stated that we should return to the starting point of Kankeiren. To fulfill the objectives of the establishment of our organization, we must truly represent all enterprises in the region.

Specifically, we must make our own organization more open and accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises. We must listen more carefully to the voices of greater numbers of members and local residents, and speak on behalf of them. Above all, we must compile policies incorporating the views of as many members as possible. We will study concrete methods to realize these visions.

Before concluding this address, I would like to introduce to you a word of Confucius. The Chinese saint once stated that the most important thing in life is to keep *chujō* (benevolence). By *chujō*, he meant the inherent sincerity and compassion that all people bear in their minds. Over its long history, Japan has encountered countless disasters and myriad challenges. Each time the Japanese people encountered such a challenge, they have overcome it, rendering the country even stronger and more attractive. I believe that this was possible because the Japanese people embraced the spirit of *chujō* or benevolence.

Finally, I would like to conclude this address by expressing my resolution to work for Japan and for the early recovery of the afflicted areas in East Japan. Once again, I would like to request your generous support and cooperation in these endeavors. Thank you very much.