

SDGs National Forum in Nagano 2020 *SDGs*

As we enter the most crucial decade for realizing the SDGs,
we have gathered here to take the first step
to transform the world into a better place for our children.

Summary Report

- Dates** Saturday, January 30 and Sunday, January 31, 2021 (held online)
- Organizer** Nagano Prefecture Co-organizer : Nagano City
- Supporters** Cabinet Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of the Environment, the SDGs for Regional Revitalization Public-Private Partnership Platform, Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), United Nations Information Centres, Global Compact Network Japan, National Governors Association, Japan Association of City Mayors, National Association of Towns and Villages
- Media partners** The Shinano Mainichi Shimbun, The Asahi Shimbun, The Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun, The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, NHK Nagano Broadcasting, SBC (Shin-etsu Broadcasting Co.), NBS (Nagano Broadcasting Systems), TSB (TV Shinshu Broadcasting), abn (Asahi Broadcasting Nagano), Nagano Prefecture Cable TV Council, FM Nagano
- participants** 2,536 viewers (cumulative total)



Nagano Prefecture supports
the Sustainable Development Goals.



学びと自治の力で拓く新時代

SDGs未来都市

長野県

Opening Remarks

Shuichi Abe Governor, Nagano Prefecture



Accelerating the implementation of the SDGs despite the pandemic

This year’s SDGs National Forum is held in Nagano Prefecture, a rural area surrounded by mountains, taking up the torch from cosmopolitan Kanagawa Prefecture by the sea which held the first forum in 2019. The four major programs of this forum are: 1) sustainable lifestyles and communities in pursuing the SDGs, 2) roles of local governments in implementing the SDGs, 3) new corporate standards, and 4) climate change.

This forum is held online due to Covid-19, but the pandemic certainly does not undermine the need for us to fully commit to the realization of the SDGs. I hope the forum will enable us to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and build a sustainable future for the planet, starting from local communities.

Guest Remarks

Tetsushi Sakamoto Minister appointed by the Cabinet Office (Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, Minister of State for Regional Revitalization)
Minister for Promoting the Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens
Minister for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan



Applying the SDGs’ integrated approach in regional revitalization

Both the SDGs and regional revitalization require all stakeholders such as local governments, corporations, organizations, schools, research institutions, and citizens to act in collaborative partnership. The first SDGs National Forum declared the SDGs Japan Model to pledge that local governments throughout Japan would implement the SDGs. Addressing regional challenges based on the principles of the SDGs will accelerate the national implementation of the SDGs as a whole.

Japan defines the next 10 years from 2020 to 2030 as “the 10 years of action” aiming to fully realize the SDGs. While taking effective countermeasures against Covid-19 and implementing regional revitalization, we must urgently adopt the SDGs’ integrated approach to balance the three inseparable dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. I hope this forum will stimulate more active involvement in the SDGs Japan model to bring about regional revitalization.

Guest Remarks

Takashi Uto State Minister for Foreign Affairs



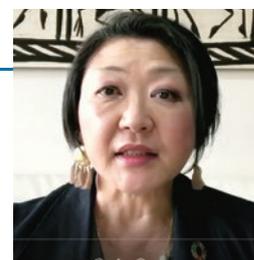
Local actions on SDGs to inspire the world

The Covid-19 pandemic has utterly transformed the world. People in vulnerable situations are especially suffering from the effects of the pandemic, which has significantly disrupted efforts to achieve the SDGs. In order for us to build forward better, the SDGs with the pledge of “no one left behind” provide indispensable guidelines to follow.

The principles of the SDGs must be disseminated throughout Japan since local governments’ actions towards realizing the SDGs will generate positive effects in solving regional challenges such as population decline and economic slowdown. Japanese local governments’ approaches to the SDGs are highly regarded around the world. I hope this forum will inspire communities within and outside of Japan to take action to achieve the SDGs.

Guest Remarks

Kaoru Nemoto Director, United Nations Information Centre



The SDGs as our compass to recover stronger

Soon after we declared the next 10 years from 2020 to 2030 as “the 10 years of action,” the Covid-19 calamity struck. This pandemic has exposed many of society’s underlying issues, set back progress made on eliminating poverty in recent decades, and delayed our efforts to achieving the SDGs. When we recover from Covid-19, we cannot simply return to our old ways which ultimately caused this crisis. We must recover to build a better, more inclusive, and sustainable society. The SDGs will be our guide, our compass in this journey.

With a strong sense of urgency, the United Nations believes that we cannot pass on this beautiful planet with shared prosperity to future generations if we do not intensify our efforts now. I hope we can move one step forward from simply “knowing” the problems to “acting” to solve the problems.

Keynote Speech

Masakazu Taniguchi Marketing Consultant/
CEO of Japan Life Design Systems, Inc.



The era of sustainability and survival

This transformative era poses the fundamental question, “What should we value the most in our lives?” Sustainability has become a new global common language. We should not aim for a standardized norm by comparing ourselves with others, but each one of us should be able to live a fulfilling life where we can be true to ourselves. It is you who must survive this era of transformation. No one else but each one of us is the protagonist in our own life.

We tend to celebrate what is “extraordinary,” but something extraordinary happens only in between the ordinary days. Rather than distinguishing extraordinary and ordinary as separate matters, we should focus on finding happiness in our daily lives. Every individual is at the center of everyday lives and society. Pursuing personal interests, fulfilling our roles, and valuing each other are the key components of living an ordinary yet full life. Japan has one of the longest life expectancies in the world, but we should not be just good at living a long life. We should lead the world by setting an example of how to lead a full life in harmony with our local community.

Panel Discussion

Life Innovation Nagano

<Panelists>



Masakazu Taniguchi
Marketing Consultant/
CEO of Japan Life Design Systems, Inc.



Megumi Ushikubo
Trend Critic/CEO of Infinity, Ltd./Guest Professor at Graduate
School of Business Administration, Rikkyo University



Hirokazu Aoki
Thrift shop TRIANGLE



Tadafumi Azuno
CEO of ReBuilding Center JAPAN, Inc.



Mayu Yamamura
Agriculture Adviser at Nagano Prefecture
Life with Agriculture Support Center

<Moderator>



Yukari Motani
Rural Relocation Consultant/
President of Tomo Sogyo Juku

As we face major transformations in our society, how can we live sustainably while being true to ourselves? The three panelists are inspired by the rich nature of Nagano where they find harmony with their lives and work creatively each day to build a sustainable society. With their lifestyles as our guide, this panel discussion explored the theme of new lifestyles that are emerging in society.

Panel Discussion

Aoki Unlike conventional thrift shops, TRIANGLE only sells clothing that is donated. About 2,000 clothing items have been donated so far, clearly showing that society is full of unused things. It may sound like an exaggeration, but we believe that the more we collect used clothing, the more we make the world a better place. We are striving to build a regenerative society where each of us can pass on our used clothing to someone else without throwing them away. We hope to connect daily actions to create a large movement so that we can help improve society.

Yamamura I was born in Tokyo, but I have always loved plants and ever since I was little I was determined to live in Nagano where my mother was born. I moved to Shiojiri in 2007 and am very happy living life with my garden which I have always dreamed of having. My life is filled with creativity—when I realize I need an ingredient while cooking, I can go fetch some from my garden. When I harvest many tomatoes, I make tomato sauce to enjoy throughout the year. Growing vegetables or making food is much more fun than buying them. I hope to share the excitement of living sustainably with more people, especially children.

Azuno I established ReBuilding Center JAPAN in 2016. We buy old building materials and furniture from vacant houses to utilize them to renovate buildings and make furniture. Japan has a high percentage of vacant houses, which generate 1,385,000 tons of industrial waste annually when demolished. On the other hand, people import old building materials from overseas, causing CO2 emissions. I started ReBuilding Center Japan with the aim of resolving this contradiction. Utilizing old building materials not only makes the previous owners happy but also conserves forests and creates new jobs. We hope our business can make everyone happy.

Ushikubo When I wrote “Herbivore Boys” in 2008, young people were already starting to reject the direction that the Japanese economy was taking after the period of rapid economic growth and the bubble economy. While refusing to live competitively, they were thinking about how to dispose of products even when purchasing them, as well as enjoying making things for themselves. With more people like the three panelists in society, the younger generation will be able to live the life they desire and the older generation will notice the shift in society and be encouraged to change.

Motani In Nagano, where nature deeply affects us in each season, we enjoy being creative with our food, clothing, and shelter. I hope our sustainable lifestyles will inspire you in some ways.



Shuichi Abe

Governor of Nagano Prefecture



Masakazu Taniguchi

Marketing Consultant/
CEO of Japan Life Design Systems, Inc.

Taniguchi It is exciting that Nagano has many good examples of new lifestyles.

Abe I felt that there were common themes between your keynote speech and the panel discussion. The first is ‘something extraordinary in ordinary days,’ to discover new values in our daily lives. The second is ‘self-sufficient life,’ to increase the aspects in our lives that supply our own needs. These two themes will be very important in fostering new lifestyles.

Taniguchi If we wish to continue receiving nature’s bounty in a sustainable manner, a lifestyle like Ms. Yamamura’s ‘life with agriculture’ involving creatively living in harmony with nature will likely draw more attention. I hope this trend will be promoted further.

Abe Convenience is not always better than inconvenience. We can enjoy being creative in an inconvenient situation. For my woodstove at home, I need to carry logs from outside on cold days and it can be difficult to start a fire at first. Having a woodstove might seem inconvenient but it gives me pleasant surprises in a way that electrical devices cannot. I feel that our conventional values are starting to change. We hope to build a community from Nagano where people can live a full life not only materialistically but also spiritually.

Taniguchi The pandemic has changed everything and we are forced to think creatively. By losing the everyday life that we took for granted, many of us have realized the importance of sustaining our life force. In modern society, we have forgotten our relationship with nature, even though we cannot live without it. I think society will come to enjoy living in harmony with nature once again, and we will return to our essence.

Abe The Covid-19 pandemic and climate change might appear insuperable problems for any individual to tackle. However, neither of them can be solved without each of us changing our actions. Global challenges are actually affected largely by the lifestyles of individuals. The question today is, how can we transform our lifestyle?

Keynote Speech

Yoshinori Hiroi Professor at the Kokoro Research Center, Kyoto University

Decentralized society and localization

—The SDGs and designing a society with population decline



Local governments must play a major role in implementing the SDGs. Local actions are what lead to national and global movements. However, since the SDGs do not directly address the issues of an aging society and population decline, we must adapt the SDGs to suit the current situation of Japan.

Considering such situations as government debt and social isolation, our research group conducted an AI experiment to see whether Japan can sustain itself in 2050 or not. The results showed that the sustainability of Japan depends on whether we decide to continue concentrating the population in urban areas or take action to decentralize into other regions. The analysis also indicated that themes linked to the SDGs such as renewable energy, strengthened local communities, and the regional circular economy will be key to building a sustainable future. Today, we are seeing more SDGs-related projects throughout Japan, such as the creation of a transit mall in front of Himeji Station and revitalization of the local community with small hydropower plants in Itoshiro, Gifu.

The phrase “Think globally, act locally” illustrates the direction that we should take to achieve the SDGs. Japan is a historically decentralized nation with rich regional cultures. The country could inspire the world by creating a sustainable welfare society where harmony between the environment, welfare, and economy is achieved from local communities with no one left behind.



The city center of Erlangen, Germany (population: 100,000)

(Excerpt and summary of keynote speech)

Panel Discussion

⟨Moderator⟩ **Nobutaka Murao** Professor of Kwansei Gakuin University (former newscaster)



Case report



■ **Misako Izu** Mayor of Munakata City, Fukuoka Prefecture

Global environmental problems such as marine debris are threatening the local fishery industry. With fishery workers, students, and companies, the city works on environmental preservation activities such as making bamboo fish reefs with children to solve the issue of loss of seaweed beds and resulting loss of fish habitats by utilizing bamboo from local forests. Munakata City continues to foster a community where people of all generations can collectively work towards the realization of its slogan, “Save the Sea.”



■ **Masato Nobutoki** Director of Yokohama SDGs Design Center

The center was established to become the hub and mediator between citizens, business owners, financial institutions, schools, and local organizations. The center has created the Yokohama Wood Straw Project, products of which were used in the G20 Summit, and conducts demonstration tests with on-demand buses.



■ **Risa Tanaka** President of the Graduate School of Project Design

The school conducts research and provides education on the development of new projects, business succession, and regional revitalization. It is striving to bridge the business and educational sectors through the school’s publication editors helping children to interview companies that are working on SDGs-related projects.



■ **Atsushi Koresawa** Director of UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

As a part of the NY-based UN institutions with the mission to create sustainable urban cities, the office focuses on issues in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. By collaborating with Japanese local governments, universities, and corporations, the office works on improving the waste management facilities of developing nations using the “Fukuoka method,” hosts international conferences, and works on human resource development.



■ **Shuichi Abe** Governor of Nagano Prefecture

As exemplified in the comprehensive plan, all of Nagano’s policies reflect its pursuit of the SDGs. Nagano became the first prefecture to issue a climate emergency declaration. Nagano promotes the well-being of both the planet and people through projects such as Shinshu Healthy and Green Housing. As a countermeasure against the concentration of population in Tokyo, Nagano has initiated projects such as Shinshu Resort Telework and outdoor childcare Shinshu Yamahoiku.

Panel Discussion

Murao How can citizens work together?

Tanaka: With each individual and organization having unique characteristics, we must first outline the ideal utilizing our attractions and resources. We then should create a story that is easy to empathize with so that our vision and goal can be shared with society. It’s important to sincerely strive to make the best of each person’s strengths to work collectively in the most effective way.

Murao How can we work collectively with stakeholders coming from various backgrounds?

Nobutoki When working collectively with people with different goals and values, it is important to take action together one by one, with each of us playing our role. We hope to think together with all stakeholders to create business opportunities with the changes brought about by this pandemic.

Murao From a global perspective, what do you think about the actions taken by Japan’s local governments?

Koresawa Japan is working on incredibly diverse SDGs-related projects which should be recognized internationally, but there is definitely a recognition gap. When I am asked to give advice on the SDGs, I always say, ‘If you take action to solve a problem in your community, that will lead you closer to the SDGs.’ Just start with a small action, it is as simple as that.

Murao When we have many ideas but limited financial resources, where can we get funding?

Izu As a collaborative project with Koikeya Inc., Munakata City has launched potato chips made with ingredients sourced in Munakata. A part of the sales is donated to support our marine preservation work. It is important to encourage investment from the private sector rather than working only within the limited budget of a local government.

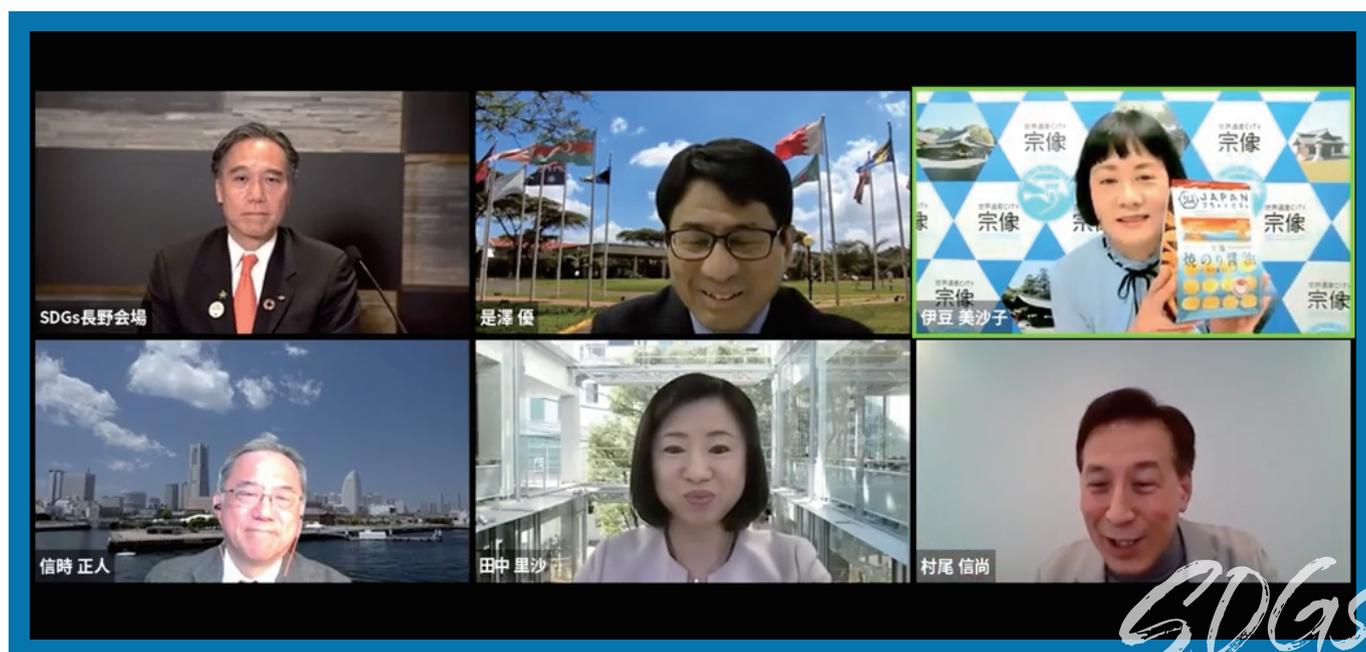
Murao I believe that shopping is voting. I love the idea that buying something ethical can contribute to building a sustainable society while solving financial issues.

Murao What is the most important thing that a local government should work on to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs?

Abe We have ‘learning’ and ‘the autonomy’ as the main pillars of Nagano’s comprehensive plan. We recognize the importance of supporting citizen-led initiatives by creating an environment where each one of our citizens can learn about the SDGs and act based on the knowledge gained.

Murao This discussion has made me realize once again that each community cannot achieve the goal of building a sustainable society without local governments, companies, NGOs, and citizens working collectively, all with a sense of ownership.

(Summary of discussion)



Message from Future Generations

- Mizuki Omiya** second grade in Nagano Prefectural Nagano Senior High School
- Miyuki Kudo** first grade in Nagano University
- Kanta Nakazawa** second grade in Nagano Nihon University High School

Three students representing future generations conveyed their feelings about today and determination for the future in their message.

SDGs National Forum in Nagano 2020 Message from the Next Generation

How do you live now to dream for tomorrow?

Since the spread of COVID-19 in 2020,
our lives have been turned upside down,
restricted in so many ways.

Facing the loneliness,
some days, I wonder if what I'm doing is right.

Other times,
I feel small and helpless compared to those around me,
and simply pass through the day.

At those times,
my continuing dreams,
my uncompromising beliefs,
and my friends give me strength.

Friends who have cried with me through strife,
friends who accept and understand.
Together with them, I can get through any day.

Even in this uncertain world,
we believe in each other, and that we can unlock the future,
continuing to hold our passions dear.

Representatives of the Next Generation:

OMIYA Mizuki

KUDO Miyuki

NAKAZAWA Kanta

Proponent Representative:

ABE Shuichi,
Governor of Nagano Prefecture



Mizuki Omiya



Miyuki Kudo



Kanta Nakazawa

Omiya “Many of our friends helped us to write this message. Please share our hopes in this message to as many people as possible.”

Governor Abe signed the message as the delegate of proponents and adult members in society to express full commitment to supporting future generations in building the future together.



Remark from the prefecture holding the next forum

Taizo Mikazuki Governor of Shiga Prefecture



Mikazuki We will continue our dialogue from this forum held in Nagano to accelerate the realization of the SDGs within and outside of Japan to advance a green recovery both amid the pandemic and beyond to achieve the SDGs. I hope to see you all at the next SDGs National Forum in Shiga Prefecture.

Abe I will pass the torch I have received from Kanagawa Prefecture to Shiga Prefecture. All the local governments in Japan must work together towards the SDGs. We look forward to the next forum in Shiga.



Keynote Speech

Masao Seki Specially Appointed Professor at the School of Business Administration, Meiji University/
Senior Advisor of CSR at Sompo Japan Inc.



Integrating the SDGs into business operations to “build forward better”

Today, not all countries are on track towards the SDGs, and we lag far behind our goals in climate change, poverty, and inequality in particular. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the fragilities in our society, necessitating urgent action to solve the root causes of the problems. With the coronavirus crisis, the need to intensify our efforts on the SDGs is greater than ever. We have to transform our mindset to “build forward better,” to work towards creating a better future rather than returning to our old ways.

I believe that corporations and local governments are the two main leading players in realizing the SDGs. Of course, the national government must also take action. However, it is preferable and more effective for corporations and local governments to lead the way in stages. Recently, more and more companies are realizing the role they can play in building a sustainable society and aligning their business strategies with the SDGs. I would like to recommend “SDGs Compass,” a great guidebook illustrating concrete measures for corporations to integrate the SDGs into their business.

Last but not least are human rights. It is not too much to say that the SDGs were created for the sake of achieving human rights. Companies must understand that human rights are the main theme of the SDGs and integrate the SDGs into their business operations to transform society into a place where every individual can live as a human being with dignity.

(Excerpt and summary of keynote speech)

Panel Discussion

◀Moderator▶ **Tomoko Hoshino** Deputy Director of Environmental Partnership Council



Case report



■ **Harushi Yoshihashi** Director of Client Liaison and Sustainability Promotion Office at Seiko Epson Inc.

Epson is contributing to building a sustainable society with “the value creation story” which identifies the social challenges and key issues for Epson to address. Epson has released “PaperLab,” an office machine that recycles used paper directly into clean white sheets of paper, to solve social problems while providing high-quality services.



■ **Katsuhiro Kondo** Manager at Patagonia Provisions, Inc.

With the mission “We’re in business to save our home planet,” Patagonia markets and sells outdoor clothing and gear. Realizing that food is one of the main causes of the environmental crisis but also a possible solution, Patagonia entered the food business. Patagonia Provisions uses business as a force for solving the environmental crisis by marketing food products from regenerative farming.



■ **Chika Yamanaka** Program Director at Toyota Mobility Foundation

The foundation is working to improve the system of mobility in small cities and mountainous areas in Japan, which are facing aging and declining populations as well as challenges due to the shrinking public transportation system. The foundation strives to improve access to transportation by working with local stakeholders (local governments, citizens, public transportation companies, and NPOs) in various fields (transportation, welfare, education, health care, and tourism).



■ **Mariko Kawaguchi** Specially Appointed Professor at Rikkyo University/Executive Advisor to CEO at Fuji Oil Holdings Inc.

She conducted research on sustainable challenges at the Daiwa Institute of Research until 2020. Collaborative partnerships among business (CSR), finance (ESG investing), and lifestyle (ethical consumerism) are indispensable in building a sustainable society. As a means to transform the economy, ESG investing is rapidly expanding in the Japanese market.

Panel Discussion

Hoshino How can we transform a corporate philosophy into business?

Kondo In the early 90s, we realized that business has an immense impact on the environment. We soon set an ambitious goal to manufacture products with minimal environmental impact, which has allowed us to steadily solve problems and transform our operations. It is crucial to set a vision or goal with a concrete image of the future and to carry on without stopping.

Hoshino What do you consider when working with local communities?

Yamanaka It is important to start by discussing and establishing a shared goal among the members of the local community. It takes time to reach a consensus when working with people from different sectors of society, but the process itself is very meaningful. Such dialogue is the foundation of a strong team working towards a shared goal.

Hoshino What is your view on business and human rights?

Yoshihashi Human rights are one of our top priorities included in our ‘value creation story’ as a key issue. We are part of RBA, an information-processing device and electronics industry coalition dedicated to CSR. We work collaboratively with our factories, suppliers, and distributors to fulfill our CSR.

Hoshino What are the recent trends in ESG investing and ethical consumerism?

Kawaguchi Environmental risk is increasingly being included in the criteria for examining investments and loans. Retail stores are prioritizing stocking products with Fairtrade and environmental certification marks, showing that consumers are becoming far more conscious about sustainability.

Hoshino How can we increase profitability? (A question asked by a participant)

Kawaguchi If we knew the answer, I think everyone would already be doing it. First, we must train our employees to be able to grasp society’s needs. Second, it is important not to assess the profitability of a project right away, but to cultivate the project with a long-term perspective.

Seki There is no single answer. Each company should discuss with its stakeholders to define its key issues. There are 17 sustainable goals and 169 targets in the SDGs. Each company should read them all to find connections with its business.

Hoshino How should we approach environmental problems that do not directly affect the profitability of our business? (A question asked by a participant)

Seki The profits that appear in the quarterly statements should be considered separately with a different timespan from the profits that are generated in five to ten years. Actions for the environment should be considered as future financial information, rather than as non-financial information.

(Summary of discussion)



Keynote Speech

Yukari Takamura Professor at Institute for Future Initiatives, University of Tokyo

Towards carbon neutrality in 2050 —creating a better future from local communities



As you might have noticed, large-scale natural disasters are increasing in number and frequency. In recent years, quantitative data can show us how many of these natural disasters are caused by greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. If these emissions continue unchecked, the temperature will rise by 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in 2030.

International long-term goals are important for envisioning the future, defining the social challenges, and indicating the innovations and transformations to be made. Achieving carbon neutrality in 2050 is an indispensable requirement in keeping what we have agreed to in the Paris Agreement, which is striving to limit the increase in temperature below 1.5°C. With many countries making the transition to become carbon neutral, Prime Minister Suga declared that Japan aims to become a carbon-neutral society by 2050. However, this goal certainly cannot be achieved with our current policies. Energy, architecture, and transportation—every aspect of our society must change significantly.

Today, more companies are taking action to reduce emissions through their supply chain, shifting to ESG investing, and integrating countermeasures for climate change in their management policies. Also, in some cases renewable energy is creating new jobs, improving resilience in natural disasters, and solving regional challenges. I look forward to hearing more dialogue on actions for climate change from local communities.

(Excerpt and summary of keynote speech)

Panel Discussion

⟨Moderator⟩ **Mariko Harada** Coordinator at Think the Earth



Case report



■ **Masaaki Kobayashi** CEO of Japan Environmental Storage & Safety Corporation

Masaaki Kobayashi, CEO of Japan Environmental Storage & Safety Corporation
Both the SDGs and Paris Agreement set the shared large-scale goals for developed and developing nations alike. “Regional Circular and Ecological Sphere,” which is the SDGs translated to suit Japanese society, will be the key to building sustainable local communities. He hopes that the older generation will gain inspiration and support the younger generation to realize the SDGs.



■ **Kenya Katayama** Mayor of Niseko Town, Hokkaido

With the spirit of ‘mutual aid’ which correlates with the philosophy of the SDGs, the town is working collectively with the citizens to build a new housing development that incorporates the perspectives of the SDGs and a sustainable super-insulated town hall with a natural circulation system. By 2050, Niseko aims to reduce its CO2 emissions by 86%.



■ **Toshikazu Suganuma** CEO of Ohisama Shinpo Energy Inc.

To avoid leaving environmental problems for future generations, he partners with many regions to promote solar energy which can be generated locally and used to build active local communities. He organizes the Iida Renewable Energy College to increase access to environmental education. In the next 10 years, he hopes to supply renewable energy to half of the Shimoina region in Iida.



■ **Mayumi Fujikawa** President of Ueda Citizens’ Energy

She promotes the use of solar energy through the “Ainori-kun project” which connects rooftop owners and investors, holds DIY workshops on installing heat insulation to increase the sustainability of buildings, and works on fostering sustainable communities. She believes that even though small in scale, citizen-led actions have significant impacts in changing society.

Panel Discussion

Harada What is your impression of Nagano Prefecture's countermeasures for climate change?

Kobayashi Nagano is one of the most progressive and motivated prefectures in Japan with a governor who is passionate about sustainability, a cross-cutting government body, and a local culture which welcomes new challenges. I hope other local governments can learn from Nagano Prefecture and work towards the shared goal in healthy competition.

Harada How do different generations approach climate change differently?

Suganuma Junior high and high school students understand very well that they are facing the effects of climate change daily. The older generations are feeling the effects, but do not seem to realize that the effects will be even larger if we do not make a transformation now.

Harada How has the social situation regarding "Ainori-kun" shifted in the past 10 years?

Fujikawa At first, it was little-known or assumed that only certain people would join. Today, many people join more casually.

Harada The SDGs are large-scale shared goals illustrating the kind of future we hope to have. Please share your experience of working with future generations.

Fujikawa In Nagano Prefecture Hakuba High School, students themselves host workshops on installing heat insulation for their classrooms with adults supporting them. Recently, schools often ask us to give talks. I believe that climate change is becoming a major theme in education.

Katayama We hold the SDGs international future conference for high school students. Providing an environment where the younger generation can learn and take action on the SDGs and sustainability is a crucial role of local and national governments.

Harada How are you building a sustainable community?

Katayama Niseko Town has established Niseko Machi, Inc. as our second town hall for implementing the SDGs and environmental policies. We are also learning a lot from other pioneering local governments. Creating a sustainable environment is an exciting collaborative action for the future of our children. Our citizens' passion for the local community is what motivates us.

Harada What are the challenges and solutions in the citizen-led solar energy project?

Suganuma We have been supported by many people throughout Japan who bought our investment funds and building owners who let us use their rooftops almost free of charge. We have established a retail electricity supply company to promote the use of energy that is locally generated, but it is very difficult to get people to fully understand the difference from other sources of electricity.

Harada What kind of relationship should a local government and its citizens have in addressing climate change?

Kobayashi Solving climate change requires major transformations, which cannot be done by local and national governments alone. Partnership is highly valued in the Paris Agreement. Spreading this message throughout all local governments, NPOs, and citizens is what truly makes a difference, but is also a challenge. I believe it is vital to build more communities where all of us can freely discuss the SDGs and Regional Circular and Ecological Sphere.

Takamura Every panelist seems to strongly believe that combating climate change is indispensable in passing the local community to future generations.

(Summary of discussion)

