

Bridging Ceremony

from the International Year of Biodiversity
to the International Year of Forests



ALL PHOTOS MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

Representatives from national governments, international organizations and NGOs gather at the bridging ceremony linking the International Year of Biodiversity with the International Year of Forests

A Fresh Start for Forests, A Fresh Start for Biodiversity

From December 18 to 20, 2010, a closing event for the International Year of Biodiversity was held, mainly in the city of Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture. The Closing Ceremony held on December 18 brought together about 400 participants from twenty-nine countries and regions, including Minister of the Environment Ryu Matsumoto, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Michihiko Kano, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity Ahmed Djoghlaif, and other officers and representatives of the governments of various countries, international organizations and NGOs.

In the first and second parts of the ceremony, leading representatives gave speeches on the results achieved at the tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in October, 2010. Minister Matsumoto, who presided over COP10, said, "Thanks

to the cooperation of so many of you, we were able to achieve numerous results, including the Aichi Target and Nagoya Protocol. In retrospect, the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity turned out to be a very fruitful year for global biodiversity, and an unforgettable one for me."

Afterwards, a bridging ceremony to the 2011 International Year of Forests was held. Jan McAlpine, director of the United Nations Forum on Forests, said, "The ceremony marks the starting point, not only for forests but also for biodiversity." McAlpine and Djoghlaif then exchanged plaques bearing the logos of the International Year of Biodiversity and



Participants in the panel discussion held as part of the Commemorative Symposium

International Year of Forests.

Life in Harmony

The next day, a symposium commemorating the International Year of Biodiversity was held in the morning, with the general public invited. Governor Masanori Tanimoto of Ishikawa Prefecture give a presentation on conservation and use of *satoyama* and *satoumi*, human-influenced natural environments which cover about 60% of Ishikawa's area. He then reported on the application to have *satoyama* and *satoumi* in the Noto region of Ishikawa Prefecture registered as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in 2002 for protecting and utilizing traditional farming methods, landscapes and biodiversity). To close the symposium, singer MISIA, the COP10 honorary ambassador and promoter who is planning to start the MISIA Forest Project in Ishikawa Prefecture, passionately sang "LIFE IN HARMONY," COP10's official theme song.



MISIA on stage at the symposium singing "LIFE IN HARMONY," the official theme song of COP10

TOPICS

Experiencing Satoyama

In the afternoon, an excursion program welcomed a large number of participants. Visits were made to Kenrokuen, a traditional Japanese garden, Kanazawa Castle and other places that introduce Kanazawa's natural features and the culture and history that have been cultivated there. Blessed with rich nature, Kanazawa abounds in traditional crafts that make use of Kanazawa's vegetation, such as dyed products, handmade Japanese paper and lacquer ware. One of the foreign participants who tried indigo dyeing on a bandana at the Center for Crafts and Culture said with a smile, "I'm very happy with the one-of-a-

kind bandana I made... Now I'm fully aware of how the Japanese people have utilized the gifts from satoyama so skillfully."



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Participants on the excursion program at Kanazawa Yuwaku Edo-mura, where eight houses from the Edo period (1603-1867) have been relocated

Participants tried indigo dyeing on a bandana at the Center for Crafts and Culture in a suburb of Kanazawa on December 19, 2010.

Second Kan Cabinet Reshuffle

On January 14, Prime Minister Naoto Kan reshuffled his Cabinet for a second time, following his first shakeup of ministers on September 17, 2010. At the first meeting of the newly inaugurated Cabinet on the same day, the Basic Policies for the Second Reshuffled Kan Cabinet were decided.

“Regarding this year as the base year for launching a twenty-first-century opening up of Japan, we will aim for the Japanese people as a whole to be active internationally as occurred in the Meiji Restoration and in the postwar era, through trade liberalization and the revival of agriculture in which young people participate,” the Cabinet stated in the Policies.

In addition, the Cabinet agreed that “in order to create a society in which the people can have hopes for the future, we will engage in good-faith



Prime Minister Naoto Kan speaks to the press following his second Cabinet reshuffle, January 14.

efforts to rebuild in an integrated manner the economy, public finances, and the social security system while implementing the New Growth Strategy steadily and rapidly.”

At a press conference held before the Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Kan explained that the main

purpose of his second reshuffle was to strengthen the Cabinet’s capacity to overcome the critical situations facing Japan at this time, such as economic stagnation, worsening public finances and an unstable social security system.

“A major issue at present is a social security system regarding which we can have peace of mind going forward, meaning what modalities the system should take and, at the same time, how we can ensure sustainable fiscal resources for it. It will be necessary to hold discussions on these matters,” Prime Minister Kan said.



Ministers of the second reshuffled Kan Cabinet pose for a commemorative photograph after their first Cabinet meeting, January 14, 2011.

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