

Welcome Greeting

Your Imperial Highness Prince Takamado, Director General Kitagawa of the Environment Agency, Mr. Kondo, EMECS '90 chairman, Mr. Long, environment director for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Mr. Manos of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP), Mr. Takechi, director general of the Water Quality Bureau of the Environment Agency of Japan, mayors and prefectural governors from cities and prefectures bordering on the Seto Inland Sea, and



distinguished participants who have come here today: it gives me great pleasure to witness the opening of EMECS '90, the world's first conference held to explore and discuss the problems facing enclosed coastal seas. On behalf of the Governors and Mayors' Conference on the Environmental Protection of the Seto Inland Sea, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the many participants from both Japan and other countries around the world.

Since ancient times, the Seto Inland Sea has been a major artery for transit in Japan. The Seto Inland Sea has nurtured and supported man's activities, contributing to our cultural heritage and the development of such fields as education, industry and economics. In order to continue these benefits in the future as well, it is our common responsibility to preserve and enhance the beauty and purity given to us by nature. The Governors and Mayors' Conference on the Environmental Protection of the Seto Inland Sea has worked diligently to this end. And now, as projects are underway to complete three new bridges across the Seto Inland Sea, linking Honshu with Shikoku, we are poised to enter a new era. Nevertheless, we must protect this region, not only for the 30 million people who live in the Seto Inland Sea region, but for the sake of all the people of Japan. We must strive to create a beneficial environment for the coming of the new century, to recreate a region that people both at home and abroad can admire and be proud of. This is task of vital importance.

In similar fashion to the Seto Inland Sea, many enclosed coastal seas around the world have made a major contributions to man's activities. They have nurtured culture in countless forms, and they are now faced with the same difficult environmental problems. The excellent environment of enclosed coastal seas is not for our generation to benefit

from alone; it must be passed on to future generations as well. It is my hope that, at EMECS '90, we can teach and learn from each other, sharing our information and experiences, and together find a way to cope with the problems dealing with the preservation and appropriate use of such environments in these regions.

All of the governors and mayors, myself included, have agreed, at this general session, to earnestly support the creation of a body to study the Seto Inland Sea in order to ensure the success of EMECS '90 and preserve and enhance the environment of the Seto Inland Sea in the future. We have great hopes that EMECS '90 will prove to be a fruitful opportunity to deal with the many problems facing the Seto Inland Sea. The fact that this conference has at last become a reality is due to the admirable efforts of Chairman Kondo, the Executive Committee and all of the many other participants. We have received support from many different directions, all aimed at making this conference a great success.

Once again I would like to express my gratitude for this support, and my pleasure at being here at the opening of this conference. Thank you very much.