

Opening Remarks

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Innovation is to create new social values. Various new technology and devices may not create economic values, but may become an engine of new economic growth. As will be briefed later, world-wide-web or <www> was introduced in 1992 and the world has becoming more connected and 'flattening' computers. One year prior, 1991, the Cold War ended and global market economy emerged.

At the same time, adverse impacts of existing industrial and economic growth patterns became quite recognizable as one can see in Rachael Carson's 'Silent Spring' in 1962, Limit for Growth by the Club of Rome in 1972, and UN Brundtland report 'Sustainable Development: Our Common Future' in 1987. But little world-wide actions could not be taken. Environmental issues were only secondary to the Cold War with many nuclear warheads.

With the end of Cold War, first Environment Summit was held in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, which delivered 'Agenda 21' toward Sustainable Development. This was followed by Rio+10 or World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 in Johannesburg, Prime Minister Koizumi offered 1.5 billion US\$ for education in developing countries, which led to the launch of UNESCO's 'Decade for Education for Sustainable Development'. Further, the effort of IPCC on climate change and global warming has drawn wider public attention in part due to the effective campaign led by Al Gore, thus IPCC and Mr. Gore jointly received Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. Neither could have been named alone. The significance of science-based climate change policies must be understood by greater general public; otherwise, they cannot become a political agenda.

In the connected world through internet, new businesses emerged like yahoo and amazon both in 1994, Apple almost bankrupt in 1997 back again with iPod, iTunes and Google is everywhere just only after 10 years. A part of iPod was designed by Japan, but produced by a Taiwan company and its factory is in China. In the global flat world, manufacturing high quality products is not enough. Like Intel you have to focus on your core strength and collaborate globally to strengthen your weakness. Manufacturing good products could be done in developing countries, just Japan did in 60s. You must remain competitive

The gap between rich and poor will expand in the global market economy. What could be done? Two years ago, the Nobel Peace was awarded to Dr. Yunus and his Grameen Bank, that helped women to become independent, emergence of social enterprise or social entrepreneurs. This is an example of effective measures to relieve poverty. Microfinance has now spread to more than 60 countries. Many NGOs and their 'bottom-up' activities have emerged rapidly and spreading throughout the world, which represent new global movements in response to global market economy in connected and flattening world.

Japan will host in late May, 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), well known among African nations, and five weeks later there will be a G8 Summit hosted by Japan. Can Japan demonstrate its leadership in global agenda? Where is the vision of Japan? 'CoolEarth50' a proposal by Japan at Heiligendamm was widely welcomed by the world, but since then what kind of messages and policies Japan has launched? I wish each one of you and Japanese think 'WHY?'