

Eco-products International Fair 2009

Official Opening

Address by Chairperson for Preparatory Committee for the EPIF; and
Chairman of the Board, Sumitomo Mitsui Baking Corporation

Mr. Teisuke Kitayama

19 March 2009, SMX Convention Center, Manila, Philippines

Thank you for inviting me to speak on the occasion of the APO-sponsored Eco-products International Fair here at the SMX Convention Center in Manila. On behalf of the Japanese exhibitors, I would like to express my appreciation to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita for gracing this occasion.

The global economic turmoil triggered by the financial crisis in the USA is still unfolding. At this stage, it may be too early to draw any general conclusions from the current situation. However, it seems safe to say that the crisis has not changed the basic foundations of the Asian economy, particularly its resilience. Our region has naturally been affected and may be affected even more seriously in future. Some countries may suffer more than others. But the crisis will probably not alter the trend for the Asian region as a whole to grow more rapidly than other regions for some time to come.

This is why it is vital to preserve the environment and slow global warming in Asia. This message is being spread to countries in the Asia-Pacific region through the APO's Eco-products International Fairs previously held in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam and now in the Philippines. Because Asia continues to be a region of economic dynamism, we must ensure that our development efforts do as little harm to the environment as possible. Asia is the only region where large-scale eco-products fairs are organized annually, with the host countries rotating among the APO membership. The

Philippines and past and future EPIF host countries in Asia should take pride in this.

With systematic efforts to spread awareness of the benefits of eco-products and -services, I am sure that our region will have the most environmentally enlightened consumers in the world. Those enlightened consumers will encourage the private sector to offer more eco-friendly and energy-efficient products. The region that achieves sustainable economic development will ultimately be the leader of the 21st century. The Asia-Pacific is making efforts to reach that goal faster than any other region. I hope that this EPIF represents one giant step toward that goal.

Before concluding, I wish to thank all the Japanese exhibitors for their contributions to this fair and to the cause of sustainable development. Without their cooperation, my task would have been much more difficult.

On the Philippine side, I would like to thank every one of you for your support. I am especially grateful to former First Lady Amelita Ramos for her untiring efforts in organizing the EPIF 2009. As her counterpart, I know full well how difficult it was to recruit nearly 90 exhibitors from the Philippines. Thank you, Madame Ramos, for your sincere efforts and significant contributions.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka and his hard-working staff who helped me with every step leading up to today's opening ceremony of the EPIF 2009.

Finally, I thank the many people both on and behind the scenes who assisted us in organizing this fair.

Thank you.