

**Message from Mr. Toshiro KOJIMA,
Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs,
Ministry of the Environment, Japan**

1. Your Excellency, Rachmat Witoelar, State Minister of Environment, the Republic of Indonesia, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

2. The Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change is one of the initiatives launched by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan in 1991 as a unique effort to provide countries in the region with an informal forum to discuss climate change issues. By promoting exchange of views and experiences, and lessons learned among countries, the Seminar has greatly contributed to policy development and capacity building of countries, and strengthening regional cooperation to address climate change. I am really pleased to announce that we have the 16th seminar this year.

3. At the beginning of the 16th seminar, I would like to stress that the recent sessions of the Seminar have been greatly successful with several outstanding developments. In the past few years, we have witnessed that the level of developing countries' participation in the meetings and their active attitude to lead discussions have been increasing significantly. I understand this has become a vital driving force to keep the Seminar lively, and to further enhance our regional efforts to tackle the issues in relation to climate change.

4. Another feature is that, in the 14th Seminar in Sydney in 2004, the Australian Greenhouse Office has joined us to the organizers side, and helped us prepare and organize the meetings. Now the organization of the Seminar is very much dependent upon AGO's wisdom in elaborating substantive foundation of discussion, while the Seminar is also supported with its generous financial contribution.

5. The Asia-Pacific Seminar has also kept a very strong relationship with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In conjunction with the 15th AP Seminar in Yokohama, Japan, held last year, we held the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Education, Training, and Public Awareness based on Article 6 of the Convention. The contribution of the 15th

Seminar to the Article 6 Workshop was regarded so significant, and the 11th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP11), in Montreal, welcomed our region's unique efforts to address climate change.

6. This year, the 16th Seminar takes up the theme of "Asia-Pacific Regional Approach to Climate Friendly and Climate Change-resilient Society". In the Asia-Pacific region, which mostly consists of developing countries, the issues of development are the largest preoccupation. In our efforts to address climate change, which is also a global and regional preoccupation, we are not free from considering the issues of development. We are already aware that the issues of development are significantly influential on how effectively and efficiently the world and the region make efforts to address climate change. The opposite is also true. In the Asia-Pacific context, we need to work on this challenge continuously hand in hand, if we really aim to achieve environmentally-sustainable development.

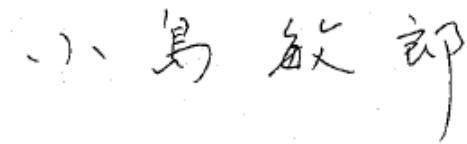
7. I am pleased to say that, in the course of organizing the Asia-Pacific Seminar, we have gained a larger representation from our colleagues from the development community year by year, in response to our calling. Again, since the issues of development are very much influential on how effectively and efficiently we make efforts to address climate change, it is vital for us to make a bridge over colleagues from the climate change community and those from the development community in order to make our collaborative efforts more effective and integrated to merge the interests of both communities.

8. I know the topic that we are discussing here at the Seminar seems to be a big challenge. However, I believe that all of us who gather here today are highly motivated to discuss this cumbersome, yet important issue in a constructive way. I hope that at the end of the Seminar, all of us will come up with several constructive ideas on how we can develop our region, our society, and our globe by integrating the efforts to tackle climate change and those to achieve sustainable development in a positive way.

9. Lastly, but not the least, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Environment, Republic of Indonesia, for their tireless efforts in supporting us preparing and organizing this Seminar in a very collaborative manner. I hope this Seminar will also provide benefits to the people of Indonesia.

10. I wish you all the great success of the 16th Asia-Pacific Seminar. I am personally really looking forward to working with all of you.

Thank you very much,

Handwritten signature in Japanese characters: 小島敏郎 (Toshio Kojima).

Toshiro KOJIMA
Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs
Ministry of the Environment, Japan