

A Summary of the Dialogue: "The Niigata Appeal on Energy and the Environment"

2009 Japan-Russia Energy and Environment Dialogue in Niigata

We would like to express the deep gratitude of the organizers—Niigata Prefecture, Niigata City, and the Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA)—that the taking place of discussions to press forward Japan-Russia cooperation on energy and the environment here in Niigata City on the two days of 10 and 11 November 2009, in continuation from last year, was something that was due to the enthusiasm and considerable cooperation of the concerned parties from both Japan and Russia.

Furthermore, this time around there was weighty discussion that entered also into the technical sphere, welcoming the International Science and Technology Center (Moscow) as an organizer.

Regarding the conference, after surveying Japan-Russia energy cooperation, three sessions were held—in accordance with the three themes of cooperation on regional development, technological exchange and interregional cooperation—on "Energy Development in the Russian Far East and Eastern Siberia", "The State of Japan-Russia Development of Technology related to the Development of Methane Hydrate Resources" and "Energy Utilization in Regional Society."

From the Russian side, the participants included the Deputy Plenipotentiary Presidential Representative to the Far Eastern Federal District, the Institute of Energy Strategy of the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, and the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Japan, representing the country, and Gazprom and Rosneft, representing enterprises. From the Japanese side, the participants were respective central and regional experts from industry, government and academia, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JFC). They have repeatedly added significant discussion for both Japan and Russia.

As organizers we summarize the opinions given at this dialogue, as below:

Continuation of the Dialogue. Ultimate Aim: Mutual Trust.

Great significance lies in proclaiming the outcomes of the dialogue on Japan-Russia cooperation from Niigata, where experience in Japan-Russia exchange and energy-utilization technology has been built up. The mutual trust between Japan and Russia which is cultivated in such an arena will become a potent driving force not only for subsequent cooperation on energy and the environment, but for cooperation with regional society, and in turn for all forms of Japan-Russia exchange.

Expansion of the Dialogue. Efforts toward the Formation of a Northeast Asian Energy Community.

Great significance lies in proclaiming the outcomes of this conference from Niigata, which has been furthering Northeast Asian exchange. With East Asia and the Asia-Pacific being key regions for energy and environmental issues on the planetary scale, it is first necessary to widen the debate aimed at Northeast Asian cooperation on energy and the environment, with this dialogue on Japan-Russia cooperation as the foundation.

The Expansion of Energy Supply Capacity and the Realization of the Stability of Supply is a Common Challenge for Japan and Russia.

With Russia as energy-supplying country, and Japan as energy-demanding country, the implementation of Far Eastern and Eastern Siberian energy development projects, the expansion of energy supply capacity, and the realization of the stability of supply bring benefits for both Japan and Russia. With the center and regions, and the public and private sectors playing their appropriate respective roles, we will have to set in order mechanisms which can provide results with certainty.

Striving to Deepen Japan-Russia Cooperation and Exchange between Regions to Contribute to the Curbing of Global Warming

The potential for Japan-Russia cooperation is extremely large in the innovative fields of the development of new energies such as methane hydrate, high-efficiency energy use, and the reduction of greenhouse gases. As seen in the initiatives aimed toward a low-carbon society in Niigata Prefecture, innovation in the energy sector does not just stop at the development of technology, but includes the process of disseminating technology within regional society. In this sense the role of regional and local governments is great, and the regional connecting-up to the gas supply, which is beginning in the Russian Far East, and the spreading of the electricity supply, etc., will become a major plank in future Japan-Russia regional exchange.

We make the appeal that the governments of both countries, local governments, and all levels of the private sector hereafter actively move these initiatives forward.

[Translated by ERINA]