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## Opening Speech

Isao Takeuchi

(representing Yuji Nishio, Governor of Tottori Prefecture, Japan)

The people of Tottori are grateful for this opportunity to introduce the interests of Tottori in Northeast Asian countries. Yuji Nishio, our governor, wished very much to attend the Forum but was unfortunately had to attend to an urgent matter, so I am attending the Forum in his place.

The Japan Sea side of Japan where Tottori is located is lagging economically behind the Pacific side. But the arrival of a new era for the Japan Sea will create the opportunity for dramatic change. Presently, Tottori emphasizes the formation of a Japan Sea rim economic sphere. Tottori, together with Kangonro, Jilin province, and the Russian coastal provinces recently held the second Japan Sea rim local government summit and jointly decided to establish a tourism organization. Also, last June, the Tottori Research Center was established. This is a semi-public, but independent organization with a mandate to study and propose policies for Tottori regarding Northeast Asia. This spring, Tottori will have a comprehensive plan for its future. The basic goal of Tottori is to become the garden prefecture. The core of this plan is the promotion of a wide range of economic and cultural exchange and cooperation between Tottori and Northeast Asian countries, using the port of Sakai as well as Yonago airport. Tottori will thus become a major gateway of Japan for these countries. Further investment and coordination in and among Northeast Asian countries is to be expected, as is the success of the Forum in promoting such investment through its activities.