

Welcome Address from the International Committee

I welcome all of you to the 16th International Conference of the Japan Economic Policy Association in Okinawa. My name is Akira Maeda and I am chairing the International Committee of our Association. The committee is a planning body for international conferences such as today's event. As the chair of the International Committee, I would like to give a warm welcome to all.

Our international conference, which started in 2002, is celebrating its 16th year. After the first conference at Chuo University in Tokyo, we have met in the Kanto area seven times, the Kansai area three times, the Chubu area twice, and the Hokkaido twice. This year, we are meeting in Naha, Okinawa, for the first time. Hence, we are very excited for this first experience and have in fact been looking forward to convening in this beautiful place.

Later, Professor Satake and Professor Ishida will go over the details of the conference attendees, schedule, and location. For now, it is worth mentioning that we have nearly 200 participants this year, around 50 people more than the past average. Certainly, the number of participants is not the only indicator of a conference success but it is a great start to a great event. I thank all of you for your attendance and contributions to this year's conference.

As Professor Yanagawa, the President of the Association, mentioned in his address, the Association holds two annual conferences every year; one in May and the other in November, which is the present event. While the May conference is well established having been held over 70 years, our international conference is relatively new with its 16 years. However, we are confident that it is growing in prestige already, and we hope this year's event will add another successful piece to its history.

Before passing the baton to Professor Satake, let me quickly mention our Association's journal, the International Journal of Economic Policy Studies. This journal is also relatively new, counting 11 volumes until now, but it is gradually getting better known. While past volumes were web-based, we are planning to make a change. In fact, in the near future, we are preparing to publish each volume in hard copy as well with a well-known foreign

publisher. Past volumes will also be republished in the same way.

We hope that this change will be a cornerstone in the development of a prestigious academic journal. We would like to ask for your support, encouragement, help, and cheering. One of the best ways by which you can contribute is writing articles. All the presenters at this conference are entitled to submit your presented paper in response to our call for papers. For details, please see the call-for-paper announcement on the back cover of your program brochure.

Again, thank you very much for participating in the 16th international conference. I hope you all enjoy this exciting event and continue to contribute to the ongoing success of our Association.

Akira Maeda