

Achievements of EXPO 2005

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Opening Remarks

President Wu, Secretary General Mr. Loscertales, ladies and gentlemen:

I am very honored and grateful to be given this opportunity to make a report on the achievements of the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan, to the General Assembly of the International Exhibitions Bureau.

EXPO 2005 came to a successful close on September 25th without any major accidents. We owe this success to the efforts and support of the 125 official participants and the many private-sector participants, and we are also sincerely grateful for the valuable guidance and cooperation we received from the BIE.

The road to success was not always smooth, however. In the final decades of the twentieth century, many began to question the raison d'être of International Exhibitions. As the organizer for the first Expo of the present century, we were under considerable pressure to re-establish the meaning and value of International Exhibitions and to serve as a model for subsequent Expos in the twenty-first century.

We gave serious attention to the intent of the resolution adopted at the BIE General Assembly in June 1994, and we were determined to organize an Expo that would contribute to the resolution of the issues that human society would likely face in the twenty-first century.

For this reason, we had to take a theme-oriented approach, and we strove to espouse higher values and have a greater impact than earlier Expos, as the resolution called for. We also sought to adequately fulfill such requests as the provision of assistance for developing countries, active involvement of the BIE, avoidance of over-commercialization, and consideration of the re-utilization of the site.

Details of our challenges and achievements will be cited in official reports.

Today, I will focus my report to you on the following four points: higher values and greater impact, operational efforts, financial results, and heritage for global society.

Higher Values and Greater Impact

Under EXPO 2005's theme of "Nature's Wisdom," we sought to point the way to overcoming global issues and creating a sustainable society by learning from the mechanisms of nature. The theme had to be expressed in ways that only

Expos can, unlike museums and amusement parks, and have a strong impact on a large number of people. This was an extremely challenging task. EXPO 2005 was able to give voice to this theme in highly diverse ways because it was pursued wholeheartedly by not only the organizers but also by other participants in designing the site, arranging the exhibits, planning events, and in all aspects of operations.

What did visitors experience at EXPO 2005?

First of all, they learned that state-of-the-art technology can be useful in coping with global issues. Throughout the Expo site, visitors witnessed alternative energy-generation systems, such as solar panels and fuel cells powered by waste materials discarded by the visitors themselves. At restaurants, they used biomass plastic kitchenware created with the help of new environmental technology.

They were thus treated to a sneak preview of the technologies that will help future societies achieve harmony with the environment. These technologies that were tested in Aichi are likely to be put to practical use in the near future, and they promise to play a big role in resolving the issues global society faces today.

Secondly, visitors also experienced new patterns of social conduct that give greater consideration to the environment. This helped raise their awareness and prompted them to change their lifestyles.

I think visitors were impressed by the fact that there was virtually no litter

around the site. Many were also asked to sort their waste into nine different categories with the help of the cleaning staff and volunteer workers. For the first time, some used “eco-money,” which they earned for eco-friendly behavior, such as non-use of plastic shopping bags after making a purchase. This “money” was later donated to various environmental causes, such as the planting of trees. In addition to these tangible benefits, the third achievement of the Expo was the nurturing of a feeling of solidarity. Instead of addressing global problems on one’s own, visitors realized the value of working together toward a common goal.

People who visited foreign country pavilions enjoyed not only the items on display but also direct contact with people from the respective countries. This experience contributed to a feeling that this planet is shared with peoples having diverse cultures, living in vastly different natural surroundings, and having various historical backgrounds. I believe that many visitors felt a strong sense of solidarity in seeing a diverse group of people bringing together the wisdom born of their natural assets, histories, and cultures to explore solutions to global issues.

Finally, the participation of volunteers, NGOs, and civic groups moved many visitors, showing them that they, too, can make a contribution to the solution of global problems.

Many people were touched by the sight of volunteers standing next to a group of trash bins and patiently helping visitors sort their trash or escorting visitors on wheelchairs. Others were surprised to learn that NGOs and other nonprofit groups based near their own communities were involved in activities of global significance. This is also a major achievement of EXPO 2005, as people realized that one small step is all it takes to have an impact on global society.

A survey of 671 boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 19 at the Expo site revealed that more than 90 percent were moved in the ways I just mentioned and that 95 percent would like to become actively involved in addressing global issues in the future. This shows that the Expo was successful in motivating visitors to action. The seeds that were sown at EXPO 2005 are being taken up by young visitors, and I am sure that they will grow into beautiful flowers and produce bountiful fruits.

EXPO 2005 also attained considerable international influence.

Many national leaders, for instance, visited the Expo. In total, we welcomed heads of state or government from 48 countries, and received ministerial-level guests on 195 occasions, and other foreign dignitaries 268 times.

Some 1,800 media people of 380 media organizations headquartered in 75 foreign countries also visited the site, either during the Expo or immediately before the opening day for the Press Preview. These foreign media

representatives made a major contribution in the area of international communications.

Operational Efforts

We must not forget that EXPO 2005 owes its success to the efforts of not only the organizers but also official participants and everyone else involved in its operation from well before the opening of the Expo to the general public through closing day. Without the people to actually run the event, we would not have been successful even if we had an excellent theme or lofty concepts.

Now that I have gone over the major achievements of EXPO 2005, I would like to describe some of the operational efforts that made those achievements possible.

The Expo Association was organized into various divisions with responsibility for the preparation and operations of specific aspects of the Expo, such as landscaping, site management, transportation and customs clearance, and public affairs. A separate liaison office was set up especially to address the needs of participants.

Particular effort was made to respond promptly to the common concerns of official participants by maintaining close communication with the EXPO 2005 Steering Committee of the Commissioners General of Section. We received thought-provoking advice following each of the fourteen meetings of the Steering Committee. I am deeply honored that the Committee's final report

concluded that EXPO 2005 was a resounding success, recognizing the Expo organizer to be reliable partner and praising our responses to the Committee's proposals.

Based on our experience, I would like to briefly relate some lessons we in Aichi learned in terms of Expo operations.

First of all, I would emphasize the importance of creating a task force to efficiently advance a chain of related activities. It is indispensable that this team be endowed with strong leadership capable of making decisions quickly down to the operational level and a full-time staff dedicated to carrying those decisions out.

Most of us in the Expo Association had never been involved in organizing an International Exhibition in the past. We were fully aware, therefore, that our plans would inevitably need to be improved. We had no choice but to be open to suggestion, and this flexibility, I believe, was a key factor in the task force's effectiveness.

Also important is pertinent advice from the international community, primarily the BIE Secretariat and the Steering Committee. It goes without saying that such advice must be given serious attention and implemented promptly.

Finally, I would point out the importance of full information disclosure and

smooth communication with the media. An appropriate level of tension vis-à-vis public opinion can instill discipline and make for smooth operations. And of course, the most important factor for a successful International Exhibition is that it be supported by the general public.

Financial Results

One major concern for an Expo organizer is how to secure the necessary revenues to cover costs. The major sources of income are government subsidies, sales of admission tickets, and private-sector contributions. Because preparations begin several years before an Expo opens, there is not a small risk of not being able to cover all costs. For an organizer, then, financial management is of utmost importance.

Our Expo was able to minimize this risk thanks to financial support from the Japanese government, which was the largest contributor to our income. It provided us with construction subsidies, assistance for developing countries, and other support to enable the expansion of international public relations activities. As a result of the assistance from the Japanese government and thanks to the large number of visitors – a final figure of 22 million visitors against our initial forecast of 15 million, we achieved a fairly good balance between our revenues and expenses. Of course, final figures are not yet available, since dismantling the structures in accordance with the “Three-R” principles of “reuse,” “recycle,”

and “reduce” will considerably push up expenditures. We will later provide the BIE with exact figures in an official document.

Heritage for Global Society

Now I would like to touch upon the kind of imprint EXPO 2005 will leave on global society.

Needless to say, the Expo will significantly enrich the world’s tangible heritage, particularly in Japan, the host country. The site will be restored to its original state as a natural park and continue to be used by area residents.

Even more important, though, is the intangible legacy the Expo will leave behind. Young people who will lead society in the twenty-first century learned much from EXPO 2005 and will, in their own ways, take action to help resolve pressing global problems. The presence of NGOs and civic groups, which participated in an International Exhibition for the first time, has broadened the network of international friendship among Expo participants and visitors and is expected to promote an expansion of exchange and other activities.

EXPO 2005 showed visitors how effective state-of-the-art technology and new patterns of social organization can be in addressing global issues and enabled them to experience how technology and social systems can be coordinated to function better together. This raised their awareness and prompted them to adjust

their lifestyles. In the future, further steps should be taken to realize a sustainable society, which was one of the goals of EXPO 2005.

I believe that we in the BIE Community need to convey to more people around the world that International Exhibitions in the twenty-first century can make a significant contribution to resolving global issues. EXPO 2005, for instance, demonstrated how the various policies proposed by the United Nations to achieve “sustainable development” might be approached.

The International Council of EXPO 2005 suggested that we make proposals to the Group of Eight Summit of industrial countries so as to broaden our presence in the international community. I am hopeful of discussing with many of you on how we may further expand our collaboration with not just the BIE Community but also with other international forums addressing global issues, such as the United Nations and the G8 Summit.

Conclusion

In concluding my remarks today, I would like to reiterate my deep appreciation to all of you here today for your generous support in helping make EXPO 2005 a big success.

This concludes my report on the achievements of EXPO 2005, and I pray for the further development of the International Exhibition movement through upcoming Expos in Chiang Mai, Zaragoza, and Shanghai.

With you, now, I would like to sit back and enjoy the video, the many fond memories of EXPO 2005 that we have shaped together. Thank you very much.