

OPENING SESSION

Welcome Speech

Yohei Sasakawa
Chairman, The Nippon Foundation



Professor Toyoomi Nagata, Chairman of the Ritsumeikan Trust, Asia Pacific University President Dr. Shun Korenaga, Sylff school administrators, professors of APU, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to speak here today. As you know, Sylff is a collaboration between three parties. There is The Nippon Foundation, which provides the original funds. The Tokyo Foundation, which administers the program. And the recipient universities, which operate the program. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest respect for the outstanding efforts of the Tokyo Foundation, of the participating universities, and of the APU staff, who have kindly provided us with this wonderful venue.

Sylff's aim is clear. We must nurture leaders who can contribute to finding solutions to society's problems. As part of this effort, we provide future leaders with the opportunity to develop their expertise at institutions of higher education. Our leaders, if they are to address society's problems, must possess three important qualities in addition to the desire to work for the good of society.

First, they must respect the voices of the people on the ground. With any social problem, there are primary stakeholders who are suffering, whose basic human rights are degraded by disability or disease, who struggle with poverty, and whose livelihood is threatened by environmental destruction. Even the most talented leaders cannot comprehend all aspects of an issue as well as the primary stakeholders can. Leaders who do not listen to these people can miss their target when seeking a solution. Therefore, to carry a project to a successful conclusion, a leader must work with those who are actually suffering. No one wants a fundamental, sustainable solution more than they do.

Second, leaders need a framework for the exercise of collective power. It is difficult for a single individual or entity to create a better society. Leaders and their partners need access to a framework through which they can join forces. This framework could be a government. It could be a local NGO. It could be the media. Or, it could be the Sylff alumni network. To be successful, leaders must bring together many partners who sympa-

thize with their activities and cooperate with them in overcoming society's problems.

Third, no matter how difficult a problem is, a leader must be committed for the long-term. People often criticize projects that seem fruitless or that meet with disappointment. With no end in sight, it can be very tempting to abandon a project as a lost cause. Yet it is the quiet, sustained efforts that create real change in society. In other words, leaders must have faith, patience, and the determination to persist with a project until they achieve results. Even if this means trying different methods and approaches along the way.

If leaders are to bring about a better society, they need these three qualities. They must listen to the people on the ground. They must harness the collective power of secondary stakeholders. And they must possess the strength and patience to see a project to its conclusion. To nurture these qualities in potential leaders, Sylff provides many practical programs, beyond the fellowship itself. Many fellows who have taken part in

these programs are present here today and will take part in the following sessions. I trust that they will share their many experiences and insights.

Over 13,000 Sylff fellows have now graduated from leading institutions around the world. Today, they are working on the front lines of such issues as poverty reduction and environmental protection. We owe the success of the Sylff program to every one of you who have gathered here today. I hope very much that the representatives of educational institutions here today will continue to use their experience and knowledge to discover and develop more such individuals.

In closing, I would like to say thank you once again to our kind host, President Shun Korenaga, and offer my best wishes for the success of this meeting. I hope that you will make the very most of this unique opportunity to deepen your friendships, share valuable information, and strengthen the bonds between your schools.

Thank you very much.

Opening Remarks

Hideki Kato
President, Tokyo Foundation



It's my great pleasure to welcome you all to the Sylff Administrators Meeting here in Beppu, Oita.

I should like to extend my heartiest welcome to Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, which became the sixty-ninth member of the Sylff community last year.

At the same time, I should also like to express my deep gratitude to APU for hosting the Sylff Administrators Meeting this year and working closely with the Tokyo Foundation to prepare for this meeting.

Since its establishment more than two decades ago, the Sylff program has spawned an extensive and distinguished community of around 13,000 current and graduated fellows who are capable of formulating effective approaches in addressing key global issues. Since we last met in Copenhagen three years ago, the world economic situation has undergone great changes, and some member institutions have been facing difficulties in the management of the fund.

One point that I would like to emphasize at this meeting is the need for more effective program administration in identifying and nurturing outstanding future leaders. This requires a more prudent management of funds.

We have set aside a special session on Wednesday and individual meetings on Thursday to address this topic in depth, and I hope that it will generate many new ideas for improvements in this area.

Another special feature this year is a session devoted to stimulating intellectual dialogue among participants from more than 60 Sylff institutions with a broad range of national and professional backgrounds. This session, which will round out our meeting in Beppu, is aimed at providing participants' fresh insights into how the many problems confronting modern society can be addressed and turning such insights into effective action. We have invited two outstanding Japanese academics to join this session.

The topic we have selected for discussion is globalization, which has greatly benefited many people around the world but at the same time has also widened the gap with those who have been unable to receive its benefits. Globalization has also increased the tension between the forces seeking greater uniformity and those insisting on preserving their distinctive culture, language, and values. By shedding light on these concerns from many different angles, we hope to identify approaches that

will help promote mutual understanding and create a better world for all. This is an issue that we need to explore in greater depth because it is intimately linked to basic questions about our personal identity.

It is the hope of the Tokyo Foundation, as the administrator of this program, to achieve greater synergy between Sylff's large global network of academic and other leaders and the Foundation's own team of policy experts who, utilizing their extensive academic networks in Japan, are very active in making innovative proposals so that the country can

make an even more meaningful contribution to the international community.

Finally, Beppu is one of the most famous hot spring resorts in Japan and is surrounded by beautiful seas and mountains. I hope that you'll get a chance to visit some of the wonderful sites in and around this city. I also hope that discussions over the next four days will be as lively and full of energy as the fumes and steam rising from the hot springs in the area. I look forward to hearing your presentations.

Thank you very much.