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Welcome Address

Discours de bienvenue

Willkommensansprache

Yutaka TAKEDA

Chairman

Japanese Organizing Committee

Tokyo, Japan

It is a great honour and pleasure as Chairman of the Organizing Committee to be able to welcome such a distinguished gathering of renowned researchers and engineers from both inside and outside Japan to the opening of the IABSE Symposium. This conference would never have materialized without the generous cooperation and selfless efforts of President von Gunten, the members of IABSE, Chairman Tokodo Ishikawa of the Japanese Finance Committee as well as the devotion provided by all others concerned. I hereby express my sincere gratitude to you all.

The 10th IABSE Congress was held in Japan exactly ten years ago, but much has changed in a decade. Against the back-drop of dwindling economic growth and diminishing public works, demand in the construction industry, chiefly for civil engineering structures, has decreased. Many related industries, including the iron and steel industry, where I serve as the Chairman of the Japan Iron and Steel Federation, are also faced with grave difficulties. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the field of your expertise, namely Civil Engineering and Construction, comprise the very foundation of social capital without which effective utilization of land and improvement of life itself would not be possible. Particularly in Japan advocates appeal for a more positive role for structural engineering on the grounds that it is the essential driving force behind the national objective of sustained economic growth focused on stimulating domestic demand. Under such circumstances the IABSE Symposium is convened today on the theme of Safety and Quality Assurance of Civil Engineering Structures. The theme is appropriate and important because civil engineering structures must be safe and durable over a long period of time despite the unpredictable severity of mother nature. Furthermore, it is extremely significant that this Symposium is held in Japan, as Japan is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to earthquakes and typhoons.



With an active participation and an exchange of views by researchers from throughout the world, the Conference is bound to pave the way for advancement in the field of structural engineering. The Organizing Committee also takes this opportunity in offering you a variety of Japanese structures. Indeed, it is very fortunate that this Symposium is held at a time when numerous bridges between the islands of Honshu and Shigoku are at the height of construction in a national project that may well be unparalleled in the world. We have prepared post-Symposium study tours and we hope that you will avail yourselves of the rare opportunity. We think we have also prepared exciting social programs for the participants and their families as an introduction to Japan where themes and customs both old and new co-exist. Those of you who have already been here ten years ago may be surprised with the newer aspects of Japan.

Finally, I would like to end by wishing us a very successful and fruitful conclusion of this IABSE Symposium here in Tokyo. Thank you very much for your attention.