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## Opening Remarks

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It is a great honor this day to welcome our esteemed cohorts from abroad and all other participants to our International Workshop, "Businesses for a Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Economy - Current Status and Future Prospect | A Japanese and German Dialogue".

This International Workshop is co-sponsored by the IGES Kansai Research Centre and the Hyogo Prefectural Environmental Create Center. As indicated in the program, the Environmental Create Center is in charge of reducing, recycling and researching waste in Hyogo Prefecture.

I would also like to point out that about a thousand events nationwide are underway to commemorate the "Deutschland in Japan 2005/2006". As one such event, the IGES Headquarters co-organized a symposium on "Climate Policy 2005 and Beyond - Japanese-German Impulses" to address the climate policy of Japan and Germany following the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, together with Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy (WI), last November 1. Incidentally, the Wuppertal Institute is located in the most populated federal state of Germany, Nordrhein-Westfalen, where the cities of Dusseldorf and Cologne are located. The Wuppertal Institute and IGES have had close relations since the preparation stages for establishing IGES. Today, Dr. Raimund Bleischwitz of the Wuppertal Institute and Ms. Astrid Becker, Director of the Japan Offices of the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen have been invited as speakers.

Everyone knows that Japan promulgated the Fundamental Law for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society in 2000 and ever since it has been amending and adopting its waste and recycling laws. This law was greatly influenced by Germany's revolutionary Closed Substance Cycle Waste Management Act, enacted much earlier. It was enacted in 1994, making it more than ten years old today. In the meantime, activities have been promoted around the world in line with the circumstances specific to each region and nation, and it has become widely recognized that we need to gain the constructive participation of regions, businesses and the general public, and integrate the environment and the economic world by means of new innovative programs, in order to enhance the effects of these activities.

Today's Workshop is being staged to cast some thoughts on ways to build a recycle-oriented society by promoting a reduce-reuse-recycle economy and local industry. Following the presentations by the speakers from Japan and Germany, there will be a discussion session at which everyone in the hall is invited and encouraged to ask questions, share comments and join in the discussion.

I am requesting every one of you to take part in this workshop until the very end and provide us an outlook on future directions for businesses and local communities in a recycle-oriented society.

Thank you very much for your attention.