

# 琉球大学学術リポジトリ

## ご挨拶

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## GREETINGS

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

On behalf of the University of the Ryukyus, it is my great privilege and pleasure to have this opportunity to welcome all of you who gathered here for the 1st International Symposium of the 21st Century COE Program. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your participation today.

The 21st Century COE Program has been promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology since 2002 in order to provide prioritized assistance for formation of global research and education centers by introducing the principle of competition and create internationally competitive universities of the highest quality in the world. This program is expected to foster young researchers as well as to promote university education reform. The program proposed by our university, "The Comprehensive Analyses on Biodiversity in Coral Reef and Island Ecosystems in Asian and Pacific Regions", which is focusing on Okinawa's unique environmental features, was successfully adopted and researchers involved in this program already started various research activities.

In our program, the marine and terrestrial environment of subtropical islands including coral reefs is regarded as a single large ecosystem. Researchers from multiple fields collaborate in research and education regarding the evolution and the mechanism of maintenance of biodiversity in the Ryukyu Islands, employing methodologies from various fields of study, from molecular biology to ecosystem ecology, and examining diverse phyla from microorganisms to higher plants and vertebrates, and from land to the coastal zone. We aim to establish an international research and education center in the Asia Pacific region to encourage young researchers, and furthermore, we hope the results of this program will make a great contribution to the international society on this important issue.

In this 1st International Symposium, we are very honored to invite Dr. Mueller-Dombois, a professor emeritus of the University of Hawaii, as the keynote speaker. As you already know, Dr. Mueller-Dombois has been taking an outstanding role in the field of biodiversity, not only in the Pacific region but also on a worldwide level. We are sure his today's speech on biodiversity in the Pacific region will be significant and beneficial for us. We are very pleased to welcome many scientists from institutions overseas with which our university concluded an exchange agreement, the University of Hawaii, University of the South Pacific, Chulalongkorn University, and Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, to our symposium as guest speakers.

In additions to those distinguished guests from overseas, we also would like to welcome two researchers from Hokkaido University, as well as many participants from the local community. We have been making an effort to promote exchanges with local people outside the campus and learn from each other. We strongly believe that the results from this program should contribute to the local community as well as to the global society. At present, about 70 researchers and graduate students are involved in this program and most of them are participating in today's symposium. It is our sincere hope that this symposium will provide you with opportunities to exchange diverse information and deepen relationships among us, and it will contribute to further development of this program.

In closing, we sincerely hope, all of you will benefit from active discussions and this symposium will be a great success.

Moshin Morita (President, University of the Ryukyus)