

Our Ocean Conference
Bali, Indonesia, 29-30 October 2018

Speech delivered by Dr. Atsushi Sunami, President of OPRI-SPF,
During Plenary Session on the Sustainable Blue Economy

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, it is indeed a great honor for me to speak to you among such distinguished panelists on the sustainable blue economy. First of all, I am profoundly grateful to the Government of Indonesia for hosting us. I am excited to see the Our Ocean Conference being held in Asia for the first time.

The Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF), is an independent non-profit think tank, committed to pursuing a “harmonious relationship between mankind and the oceans,” by linking scientific research and policies. To name a few examples of our work, OPRI-SPF, in collaboration with the Government of Japan, played an instrumental role in developing the Basic Act on Ocean Policy in Japan, which was enacted in 2007, and more recently the national Arctic Strategy, adopted in 2015. Also, through OPRI-SPF’s fellowship program at the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden, over 600 fellows have earned master’s degrees over the course of 30 years.

Now, I would like to announce that OPRI-SPF has committed to conducting research programs totaling 25 million US dollars from 2018 to 2020, encompassing fundamental aspects of the sustainable blue economy for sustainable development, namely: building a circular society, ensuring food security, addressing climate change, and enhancing ocean related safety and security.

First, within this research program, OPRI-SPF will analyze ten different sites from Japan and the South Pacific region to generate concrete blue economy models with an aim to increase benefits of local communities through sustainable use of marine and ocean resources.

One of the selected sites is Hinase in Okayama Prefecture. In Hinase, fishermen, local schools, and NGOs work together to restore seagrass beds for fish stock recovery and marine environmental improvement. A company in Okayama is transferring its technologies on building oyster shell artificial reefs to places such as the Pacific coast of Mexico.

Secondly, in this connection, OPRI-SPF is also examining broader experiences and cases with our partners. OPRI-SPF is working jointly with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to analyze and draw lessons and best practices of their overall ocean-related portfolios. One of the notable ocean related activities of JICA in Indonesia in the next three years is the

“Programme for the Development of Fisheries Sector in Outer Islands” with a grant aid of up to 2.5 billion yen.

Thirdly, we are launching a new project to facilitate Ocean and Space collaboration for further innovations. As our first step, OPRI-SPF with the Japan Space Forum is planning the first International Symposium on private/non-government activities on Marine Domain Awareness (MDA), followed by the second International Symposium on MDA cooperation applying space technologies among Asia-Pacific countries, both in 2019.

Lastly, we are an action-oriented think tank, and prefer to act through partnerships. The Nippon Foundation supports us in all aspects of our work both financially and substantively. For one of our research focuses, “ocean and climate,” OPRI-SPF will work with the Stimson Center on a project titled, “Linking Climate Change, Resource Scarcity and Global Security.”

OPRI-SPF has also been working with the Global Ocean Forum, Oceano Azul Foundation, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (UNESCO-IOC), and other partners, on the Roadmap to Oceans and Climate Action (ROCA), a multi-stakeholder initiative to advance the oceans and climate agenda. ROCA members will organize an official side event, the Oceans Action Day, at COP24 in Poland. I look forward to seeing some of you there. OPRI-SPF is also ready to work with Japanese financial institutions to create a prototype of new “BLUE” financing mechanisms.

Through these research activities, we will identify success factors and enablers for effective results, and we will disseminate our findings and relevant roadmaps with and through our close Asian and Pacific partners, as well as through 1.5 track policy dialogue with China, France, the United States, and others.

OPRI-SPF is committed to working together with you all in achieving a sustainable blue economy by breaking the molds of the past. Thank you.