

Message from the Distinguished Chair, WMI – Prof. Kazuhiko Takeuchi



I am thrilled and deeply honored to have been appointed Distinguished Chair of the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies, following in the footsteps of the late Professor and Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Muta Maathai. I had the privilege of speaking with Professor Maathai, and also receiving her manuscript submission for an editorial in the *Sustainability Science* journal, for which I serve as editor-in-chief.

As Distinguished Chair, I hope to elevate the institute's international standing as a research and education centre so as to strive for world peace and environmental restoration. To name a few, I would like to promote the institute as a centre of excellence on sustainable development and to facilitate exchanges between researchers, students and other stakeholders in Kenya and Japan. Further I hope to take an approach to provide synergy to the institute with my activities as President of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and Vice-President of the Science Council of Japan.

Drawing fully on the international networks that I have developed in the fields of peace and sustainability, on both an organizational and an individual level, it is my desire to champion within the international community the tremendous importance of the Wangari Maathai Institute in terms of its academic and social contributions.

In addition, leveraging more than 40 years of experience in research and education at the University of Tokyo, the United Nations University, and other institutions, I hope to advise the Wangari Maathai Institute on ways to advance its research and education, while also creating lecture and other opportunities for both faculty and students. Based on my experience of securing large-scale competitive funding on numerous occasions, I also hope to advise the Wangari Maathai Institute on effective ways of securing outside funds from international donors and other entities in future.

Since my days as a young researcher in my 20s and 30s, I have worked to address environmental issues in Kenya and other parts of Africa. I deeply treasure the friendships and trust that I have cultivated with the many researchers and local residents with whom I have worked in Africa. Now, in the final years of my career in research and education, I regard Distinguished Chair as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give back to Africa. As Distinguished Chair, I will seize every opportunity to spend time at the institute and help it to flourish.

Professor Dr. Kazuhiko Takeuchi

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