

Society 5.0: The Future of Hokkaido

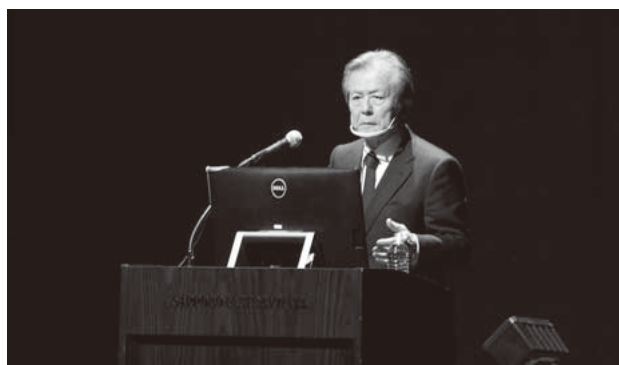
Second Forum of Hokkaido University and Hitachi Hokkaido University Laboratory



The Second Forum hosted by Hokkaido University, Hitachi Hokkaido University Laboratory, and Hokkaido University COI was held on February 16, 2021. The theme was Society 5.0: The Future of Hokkaido. This year's event was held in a hybrid format that linked participants at the venue with those online. It was attended by about 300 participants.

Hokkaido's Unique Challenges

The event began with opening greetings and greetings from invitees and cohosts. Next came a keynote address from Mitsubishi Research Institute Chairman Hiroshi Komiyama. The address was entitled “From Hokkaido: Sustainable Regional Development—Innovations for a Platinum Society.” Komiyama discussed his notion of a coming Platinum Society that will balance abundance with sustainability, and require the creation of value in areas such as health, autonomy, human connections, safety, and security. The creation of new industries prioritizing community will be the key, which Komiyama said gives him hope that Hokkaido will lead the rest of Japan in future potential. He said that in Japan's efforts to transform from its previous identity of processor nation into a self-sufficient nation, Hokkaido will be the nationwide leader in the areas



Hiroshi Komiyama, Chairman of Mitsubishi Research Institute

of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and energy. He emphasized the significance of taking on the challenge of societal implementation. To do so, students and other young people need to take these issues to heart and create opportunities to work on them. He said that all generations should learn and grow together.

A presentation entitled “Challenges Facing Hokkaido and What to Do about Them” followed the keynote address. Representatives from industry and academia gave reports on specific activities now being done related to societal implementation. The advances presented were in areas such as food, healthcare, agriculture, and energy.

The first report was from Professor Atsushi Fukuoka of the Hokkaido University Institute for Catalysis. Professor Fukuoka has perfected a new technology designed to prevent food loss by using a platinum catalyst to keep produce fresh. The second report was from Professor Akiko Tamakoshi of the Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine. Professor Tamakoshi presented findings from a mother-child health survey carried out in the city of Iwamizawa to determine the low-birthweight newborns and the influence of smoking and the intestinal environment. She also discussed advances such as systems for preventive healthcare and remote prenatal checks. The third report was from Koji Sawade, Manager of the Business Innovation Department in the Hokkaido Division of Japanese telecom provider Nippon Telegraph & Telephone East Corporation. Sawade reported on the latest achievements produced by a smart agriculture demonstration project for innovating food production. The final report was entitled “Building Communities of Coexistence.” It



Students from Sapporo Keisei High School, Okushiri High School, and Honbetsu High School showing their presentation videos

was presented by Takashi Takemoto, Deputy Laboratory Manager of Hitachi Hokkaido University Laboratory. Takemoto reported on the work being done by the lab, such as creating a health data integration platform and decentralized local energy system.

Each of the cases presented left a keen impression of how the researchers are drawing on regional characteristics unique to Hokkaido to gradually overcome obstacles as they work on solutions to issues of public concern common to Japan and the world as a whole.

A Hokkaido Filled with Hope for the Success of the Younger Generation

Following a break, the second half of the event began with a presentation from Shinji Yamada, a Corporate Chief Scientist of Hitachi's Research & Development Group who works as General Area Coordinator. Yamada provided an overview of Challenge Field Hokkaido, a project selected for the Next University-Society Open Innovation Initiative (J-NEXUS) being advanced by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Challenge Field Hokkaido is an open innovation trial for work on 13 projects originating from universities. It is a collaboration among 25 organizations spanning industry, academia, government, and finance. Yamada expressed his commitment to creating a Hokkaido filled with hope for future generations, saying he wants to grow together by bridging the barriers between people, organizations, and regions.

Yamada's presentation was followed by video presentations from three groups selected by an ideathon for high school students organized by Hitachi Hokkaido University Laboratory under the theme of discovering issues affecting Hokkaido. The groups were selected from a class called Future Vision that investigates solutions to problems the students assign themselves. Sapporo Keisei High School's presentation was about creating facilities for pleasant living in IT-oriented local areas. It examined the role of information and facilities in concrete measures for eliminating information gaps and barriers during disasters and emergencies. Okushiri High School's presentation was about how exchange students view the present and future of

Okushiri Island. The students discussed local characteristics and attractions in a workshop and shared their views on social media. Honbetsu High School's presentation was about bringing new attractions to Honbetsu. They had worked on developing their own products using the beans that are a local specialty. They presented work such as the design for a ready-made curry product packaged in a sealed plastic envelope.

There was also a panel discussion on Hokkaido's influence on the rest of the world. The panelists were Takao Masuda (Executive Director and Vice President of Hokkaido University), Kazushi Minagawa (Executive Officer and Head of Department of Research and Development at the Hokkaido Electric Power Company), Reiko Fuchigami (Manager of the Business Reform Office at the Hokkaido-based supermarket chain operator Arcs Group Co., Ltd.), and Mayuko Matsuno (a member of Hitachi's Financial Information Systems Sales Management Division). The panelists shared their views on the day's presentations and discussions while holding a wide-ranging discussion that covered topics such as new closed-system growth, collaborative creation for sustained local growth, and creating flexible work styles and venues to accommodate women and young people as the world enters the post-coronavirus future. The panel discussion was ended with some closing words from moderator Masanori Yoshino, Senior Project Manager at Hitachi's Center for Exploratory Research. Yoshino said that an important requirement for anticipating the future Society 5.0 is to identify and restore the areas of value that were lost in the evolution to Societies 1.0 to 4.0. He closed by saying he looked forward to continuing the discussion of this topic at future forum events.



Panel discussion