



## Flash Report: Tokyo Round on Acceptance of Foreign Residents



On Saturday, November 12th, we held the Tokyo Round on Acceptance of Foreign Residents at JA Kyosai Building in Hirakawa-cho, welcoming Mr. Kozo Yamamoto, Minister of State for Regional Revitalization and Regulation Reform. Nineteen roundtable participants, including seven municipal leaders from across Japan, local industry operators, researchers from universities and other institutes, and a Japanese language teacher, as well as high-level officials from

the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare who are specialists in this field, engaged in enthusiastic discussion for three and half hours.

Minister Yamamoto stated “the government’s current efforts range from those toward acceptance of elderly-care providers and housekeepers to support for venture companies and relaxation of residence qualifications for foreign entrepreneurs. We are discussing how we can accept further foreign human resources in other fields. This is very important for the future of our nation.”

The keynote lecture by Mr. Kazuyuki Furuya, Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary, covered a range of topics including the history and current situation of inbound tourism, foreign residents and illegal overstay; residence qualifications stipulated by immigration law; acceptance measures currently being studied; and acceptance policies discussed in the Work Styles Reform Conference, a private advisory body to the prime minister. The lecture prepared us for the roundtable discussion with comprehensive information about foreigners in Japan.



To open the discussion, Mayor Hiroto Takahashi of Ogata, a village on land reclaimed after World War II, spoke about their regional efforts and challenges, followed by Deputy Mayor Tsuyoshi Mano of Toyooka, a city known as a sanctuary for Oriental Storks.



Mayor Hiroto Takahashi of Ogata (right) and Mayor Mitsuhiro Kadowaki of Semboku (left), extremely busy reformist leaders participated in a day trip from Akita. In Semboku, Japan’s first demonstration of an experimental driverless bus was scheduled for early next morning.



We are beginning to receive messages from the participants, and our project member Takahiro Suzuki, Visiting Professor at Josai International University Graduate School, contributed a Yahoo! news article on this matter (<https://goo.gl/n7LAZn>). We plan to upload the messages on our website (<http://www.theoutlook-foundation.org/>) and issue Tokyo Round newsletters.

Welcoming 19 roundtable participants, 20 media representatives and almost 140 observers, Tokyo Round was a successful assembly of politicians, government officials, business operators and academic researchers.



Chairman Takaji Kunimatsu of the Outlook Foundation opened the meeting by indicating that we should engage in this matter with the long-term perspective of accepting foreigners as residents, not simply as workers.

Chief Executive Director Yoshio Ishizaka closed the event by declaring that full commitment to this issue is essential for Japan's future and that we should consider the tide of immigration in the US and the UK as well as the adversities European nations are currently facing. He announced our plan to summarize the proposals of this roundtable and promised that the Foundation would continue its efforts.

We would like to thank all the participants for dedicating their weekend to this event.