

Stakeholders' Dialogue

JR East invited experts from a wide range of fields to participate in its First Stakeholders' Dialogue, held on April 1, 2004. The theme of the dialogue was "The Roles JR East Group is Expected to Fulfill Toward the Development of a Sustainable Society."



Takashi Kiuchi
Chairman
NPO · The Future 500



Kikuko Tatsumi
Board Member
Nippon Association
of Consumer Specialists

JR East Has Tremendous Potential to Contribute to the Development of a Sustainable Society

Mr. Kiuchi: Japan is currently in a very difficult situation, and there are even questions as to whether it can continue as a nation. When discussing this topic in international circles, however, one of the things mentioned to show that Japan is not in danger is the reliability of its trains, particularly the *Shinkansens*.

Mr. Maeda: Railway companies have tremendous responsibilities to society, the first of which is safety. Other responsibilities include environmental conservation and community revitalizations around stations.

Developing Intermodal Strategies

Dr. Nakamura: I am extremely pleased when I hear that JR East is developing "intermodal" strategies that efficiently combine various means of transportation. Added value is created by linking different types of transportation. I do think, however, that the creation of more strategic concepts would be beneficial.

What do you think, for example, about increased use of railways for transport of merchandise? Since the greater part of the

traffic congestion in Tokyo is due to transport of goods, by reducing the volume of vehicles on the roads, the city will become a place where bicycles can circulate with less difficulty. If this is also connected in a roundabout way to the greater use of railways, there are likely to be a variety of benefits.

In the case of "park & ride" as well, which involves driving to a train station in one's car and then taking a train. This is not the notion of building a parking lot because there happens to be some open space, but rather is a project that prevents cars from amassing in the center of cities.

Mr. Tsuzuku: In urban areas I think, it is more appropriate to have "bike & ride" using bicycles rather than "park & ride;" it would be nice if this could be implemented as well.

Increased use of environmentally-friendly railcars

Mr. Tsuzuku: JR East is already using hydroelectric power from the Shinano River to operate its trains, and I would like to see the further introduction of the use of renewable

energy sources, such as trains that run on wind-generated power. JR East has high levels of internal consumption and can enjoy economies of scale, so it is in a favorable position to implement such measures. This would have a significant impact on the introduction of natural energy in Japan, and I look forward to JR East taking up the challenge. I would like to know specific figures on what percentage of the energy used for train operations comes from natural energy and how much this will increase in the future.

Mr. Maeda: In terms of the use of hydroelectric power generated in the Shinano River, in 2000 an arts exhibition in Niigata had works by a certain foreign artist that depicted the operation of the *Yamanote* Line using hydroelectric power generated at the Shinano River. I learned this fact from this work of art and was deeply impressed. I think it is necessary for JR East to convey this information to the passengers of the *Yamanote* Line.

Ms. Tatsumi: In Sweden, trains that operate on environmentally-friendly energy sources have environmental labels on their doors. JR East indicates that the toilet paper used in stations is made from recycled tickets; I would like to see more innovative measures



Ken Tsuzuku
President
Renewable Energy Promoting
Peoples' Forum



Fumihiko Nakamura
Associate Professor
Graduate School of Environment
and Information Sciences
Yokohama National University



Masanao Maeda
Director General
Policy Planning Department
Development Bank of Japan

like this to convey to passengers information about the company's activities. In Germany, advertising space is used for environmental communications that are both effective and very attractive. JR East should also use such spaces for environmental communication. The educational effect on passengers would be significant. I would also like to see educational programs instituted for frontline personnel so they can respond immediately to inquiries from customers concerning environmental matters.

Mr. Maeda: JR East is already taking a variety of measures with respect to safety and disaster responses, and I would like the company to provide more information about these activities through its Sustainability Report and other methods.

High expectations concerning urban development

Mr. Maeda: Stations are an important point of contact for the public and local communities. There are needs for stations to be made easier to use and more accessible.

Mr. Kiuchi: In that regard, many signs currently in use are not as helpful as they should be. There is plenty of room for improvement so that even people who don't use the trains very often will not get lost.

Dr. Nakamura: To broaden the topic of discussion here somewhat, there is also the issue of urban development that facilitates the use of railways. The idea that local residents, rather than tourists, can perform certain tasks by going to stations should be adopted. For example, libraries could be

located in stations, or taking care of certain governmental procedures at station without going to city halls. I would like to see the promotion of the "compact cities" concept that centers on train stations – in other words, sustainable urban development that is rooted in the local community so that people who live in the vicinity of a station have no need for a car. In a city where the transportation systems function efficiently, it is most likely that bus drivers and station employees perform their jobs with pride. This type of urban development certainly requires the cooperation of local government, but JR East can use its comprehensive abilities to promote this.

Ms. Tatsumi: The Company is already setting up nursery schools in the vicinity of stations. This is something that is truly helpful to working women and I would like to see even more sites introduced.

Mr. Kiuchi: The expectations towards JR East are certainly high. As a leading means of transportation, JR East must adopt a long-term view of 20 to 50 years regarding station-centered urban development in order to present a vision of a promising future. I am sure that the public will support such efforts.

Responding to the Stakeholders' Dialogue

Since its establishment with the privatization of the national railways in 1987, JR East has made the utmost effort to achieve profitability and total privatization; and in this process, I feel that our sense as being one of the foundations of society has weakened somewhat.

When we adopt our new medium-term

business plan, I am willing to discuss rightly to clearly define the mission of the Group. The mission as to what we can do for the benefit of the public and society, Japan, and the development of a sustainable society, and what our role should be. Listening to today's dialogue has reinforced my views on this subject.



Kazuyuki Kogure
Director, Management
Administration Department