

The 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Arctic Research  
Welcome Address

Thank you for the kind introduction.

I am Yoshitaka Shindo, a member of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of the “Parliamentary League of Arctic Frontier Study.”

I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations on the holding of this symposium, honored by the presence of Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado.

On behalf of the Parliamentary League, let me welcome distinguished researchers both from Japan and abroad.

We Japanese lawmakers established “the Parliamentary League of Arctic Frontier Study,” taking three points into account,

Firstly, the Arctic is the most affected area by global warming in the world. At the same time, it is an extremely important area for the environment and ecosystem of the Earth.

Secondly, the Arctic is the new frontier. The decrease of sea ice gives us an opening of Arctic sea routes and the possibility of resource development.

Thirdly, the Arctic is vulnerable to environmental change. We need to consider the impact of human activity in the region on the environment, ecosystem and life of the indigenous people.

From a political viewpoint, we have made proposals to the government about the Arctic research that we should promote and the role that Japan should play.

Our activities have succeeded in setting an Arctic policy as a part of Japan’s national strategies, in making a drastic strengthening of the Arctic

research framework in Japan, and in increasing our Arctic research budget.

To note, the expenditure for developing Japan's first Arctic research icebreaker is included in the 2018 budget plan, which will soon be discussed in the upcoming session of the Diet.

As a part of our activities, members of the League visited Ny-Ålesund, Norway in 2016. We had an opportunity to see the research activities there and to participate in the workshop at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the observatory operated by the National Institute of Polar Research of Japan.

Now, we assure you our continued commitment to provide a full political support to the Arctic research so that Japan can contribute more actively to finding solutions to the various Arctic issues.

It is my sincere hope that this symposium will advance the Arctic research further and develop research networks broader, through your lively discussions.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the organizers for their efforts to hold this important symposium and my best wishes for the success of the symposium.

Thank you very much for your attention.