

## Sixth Biomass-Asia Workshop

The 6<sup>th</sup> Biomass-Asia Workshop jointly organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Biomass-Asia Research Consortium was held from November 18 to 20, 2009 at Hiroshima City. This workshop was supported by Special Coordination Funds for Promoting Science and Technology of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and AIST functioned as the secretariat. The workshop welcomed 250 participants from 11 countries (202 from Japan including 75 from AIST). Four lectures were given by representatives from international organizations of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). Nine presentations were made by speakers from China, Indonesia, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan.

The first opening remarks were made by Dr. Masuo Aizawa, Executive Member of the Council for Science and Technology Policy and Mr. Itaru Watanabe, Senior Deputy Director-General of the Science and Technology Policy Bureau, MEXT, and Dr. Kenji Iiyama, President of the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences, and Dr. Tamotsu Nomakuchi, President of AIST, representing the Biomass-Asia Research Consortium, gave remarks as the organizers. There were keynote speeches by speakers from MAFF, METI, and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). Following the special lectures, five sessions were held for two days summarizing the feasibility studies and the workshops held during the past six years. On the second day, with a special lecture in between, the three models of biomass-

utilization in Asia carried out for the past three years were summarized. The three models were: 1) the Palm Complex Model focused in Malaysia and Indonesia, 2) Rice and Sugar Complex Model focused in Thailand and Vietnam, 3) Hybrid Agricultural Waste Utilization Model envisioned to be used mainly in China. There were comprehensive discussions including also on surrounding issues such as manufacturing, standardization, and sustainability assessment of biomass production and biofuels. In the last session, the Biomass-Asia Strategy which had been the backbone of the six year activities was reviewed and there was a presentation on the future of Biomass-Town Concept in East Asia. After panel discussions, the Chair's Summary addressed for the further development of technology for sustainable biomass utilization. On the last day, the participants took a technical tour to visit the Biomass Technology Research Center of AIST Chugoku in Kure City and the new AIST facility in Higashihiroshima City where AIST Chugoku is planned to move.



AIST President Nomakuchi addressing the workshop

## Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific ahead of the Eighteenth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development

The Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific ahead of the eighteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was held in Bangkok for two days on November 30 and December 1, 2009. AIST cooperated in the arrangements upon the request of the UN, and sent a resource person to the meeting.

CSD was formed to review and monitor the implementation of Agenda 21. Initially meetings were held every year. From 2003, however, work became a two-year cycle, and since then, reviews of the same topic have been done in the first year, and the policy suggestions have been made in the second year of the cycle. Furthermore, in addition to Agenda 21, the international guideline has been extended to include "Plan of Further Implementation of Agenda 21" and

"Johannesburg Plan of Implementation".

From 2010 to 2011, work will be done on the following topics: 1) transport, 2) waste management, 3) chemicals, 4) mining, 5) 10 year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

For the first year review, the report on the status quo by the Secretary-General of the UN is evaluated. In order to do so, a wide range of information needs to be collected from each government, regional organizations, specialists and NGOs. The UN therefore divides the world into several regions, and preliminary meetings, "regional implementation meetings", are held.

In Asia and the Pacific region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(ESCAP) in Bangkok is in charge. In response to the request from ESCAP, AIST made arrangements for the topic of mining. The specific work was done by the Institute of Geo-Resources and Environment, and Dr. Satoshi Murao, Senior Research Scientist, coordinated the work, gathered information, wrote the paper, presented the paper, and answered questions from representatives of other countries at the meeting.

On the first day, Mr. Shigeru Mochida, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP declared the meeting open, and stated that the meeting held an important position in the eighteenth session of CSD. He also thanked AIST publicly for our cooperation.

Discussions followed on the aforementioned topics, and each resource person of each specific topic presented review results of the status quo and the future issues of Asia and the Pacific region.

On the second day, the secretariat presented a report proposal, and the representatives of the various countries, and other groups considered the content. However, there were time limitations and a final agreement was not met.

Thereupon it was decided that the secretariat would draw up the final report adopting the comments made at the meeting. The final consented report will be used at the CSD eighteenth session to be held in spring, 2010, as the Chair's summary of the Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific.



Senior Research Scientist Murao reporting on mining of Asia and the Pacific (right, directly under the screen)

#### Cover Photos

Above: Assistant Robot "TAIZO" (p. 19)

Below: RAPUDA attached to an electric wheelchair (p. 20)



**AIST** NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AIST)

Publication Office, Public Relations Department  
National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST)

AIST Tsukuba Central 2, 1-1-1 Umezono, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305-8568, Japan  
TEL: +81-29-862-6217 FAX: +81-29-862-6212 Email: [prpub@m.aist.go.jp](mailto:prpub@m.aist.go.jp) URL: <http://www.aist.go.jp/>

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