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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am here because I and Mayor Tachiya is a friend since more than 10 years ago. We have been holding a study meeting to discuss the ideal state of the regional municipalities.

When the disaster occurred, a lot of activities were needed to prevent any death from happening in future. With such overload of activities, there might be something you overlook. So, we needed an advisory council to exchange ideas candidly from

a broader perspective, and I was invited to be a member. Since then, I have been associating with him. The symposium yesterday and today is representative of the achievements. So I am deeply moved by all the effort you have made.

The framework of modern society in Japan is now moving from centralization to regionalization or decentralization, but just shifting power from central to local government is not enough – local communities must revitalize themselves. Without such motivation and spirit, we cannot create future of Japan. I think the 2011 disaster awakened us to recognize the need of this spirit once again. It goes without saying that recovery is important, but we need more: we have to go for the next 5 years and next 50 years to innovate Soma, Tohoku. Such information should be sent out not only to Japan but also to the world.

Kumamoto may learn from the lessons learned in Soma after the Great East Japan Earthquake and create a safer and more resilient Kumamoto and Kyushu. You can also be a world-class successful model of appropriately address and manage radiation issues based on evidence and data. For us, members of the advisory council, this is also a excellent case of regional revitalization and we can utilize these lessons effectively for the future.

Today many experts from home and abroad are sharing knowledge and experience on radiation and children's health, and this discussion will be spread all over the world. I hope all the attendances of this symposium make these 2 days a great opportunity to change future of Japan or world from a local region. That's something we may confirm in these 2 days.

I would like to thank you all for your hard work and I would like to wish a great success of this symposium. Thank you.

