

**ADB-ADBI Joint-Conference on  
Emerging Asian Regionalism: The Challenges of Economic Integration  
12 September 2008, ADBI, Tokyo, Japan**

**Welcome Remarks  
by  
Masahiro Kawai, Dean, ADB Institute**

President Haruhiko Kuroda, distinguished guests, esteemed participants, ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the conference, "*Emerging Asian Regionalism: The Challenges of Economic Integration*". Let me thank you for participating in this conference despite your busy schedules.

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) knowledge departments decided in 2006 to embark on an institution-wide flagship study each year, supported by all knowledge departments but managed by a sponsoring department. The purpose of the conference today is to disseminate key research findings and policy recommendations of ADB's flagship study—*Emerging Asian Regionalism: A Partnership for Shared Prosperity*. The study has been managed by ADB Headquarters' Office of Regional Economic Integration with support from ADB's other knowledge departments, including the ADB Institute. The study was completed early this year and the book was launched during the ADB Annual Meeting held in Madrid in May. We are now in the process of disseminating the study results in selected countries such as Canada, the United States, Europe, Indonesia, Japan, India and China to get feedback from policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders. The conference this afternoon is part of a series of dissemination activities but solely catered for the Japanese audience.

The study tries to show how Asian regionalism offers a platform for economic development that is good for individual economies, good for the region, and ultimately good for

the world. It identifies areas where regional cooperation and integration has succeeded, and explores the foundations for further advances in regionalism. This study also highlights the way forward by suggesting how the architecture for Asian regionalism can take shape in the years to come.

The conference today will focus on the implications of Asian regionalism. The key questions that we would like to ask are: What major challenges can Asian regionalism pose to the region itself? How can it contribute to a shared prosperity around the region and around the world? What would be Japan's role in promoting Asian regionalism and how can Japan benefit from it? The findings of the book will provide a backdrop to these issues. Given your expertise and interest in the subject matter, I am confident that we can have an open, informed debate on the topical issue of Asia's emerging regionalism.

Now, let me have the honor of introducing to you the President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda, and ask him to deliver the keynote address for the conference. Please welcome Mr. Kuroda.