

## At the Midpoint of the Project

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# Preface

## “At the Midpoint of the Project”

I would like to welcome everyone to the 2nd Joint Seminar of the Multilateral Cooperative Coastal Oceanography Program that is being held this year in Tokyo in August 2005. This Core University Program is a project of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and was established in 2001 in the priority field of Marine Science with the five Southeast Asian countries of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam. The program's four main study areas of circulation and coastal processes, ecology of harmful marine microalgae, biodiversity of marine organisms, and harmful chemicals in the coastal marine environment cover a broad range of marine science subjects that are important to understanding the marine environments of Southeast Asia.

In this region of the world, the sea is a central part of the lives and economies of all the member countries, so research that will help ensure the health and long-term sustainability of vital marine resources is critically important. Many parts of Southeast Asia contain the highest marine biodiversity in the world, but alarmingly, these marine environments are increasingly under threat from overfishing, pollution, harmful blooms, and even climate instability. Therefore the goal of the Coastal Oceanography Program to advance our understanding of these marine environments is important for the future of all our countries, not only for ensuring sustainable harvests of resources, but also to help protect the unique biodiversity of the region.

This year is the midpoint of the JSPS Multilateral Cooperative Coastal Oceanography Program and great progress has been made already in a number of areas. There have been several workshops, field guides published, and two years ago the 1st Joint Seminar of the project was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Last year a meeting of the project coordinators from each country was also held in Puerto Princesa on Palawan Island of the Philippines. At this midpoint of the project it is essential to continue to strive for great scientific advances in these fields of marine science and to increase collaborative interactions so that this vital project can be continued in the future.

So welcome to the 2nd Joint Seminar of the JSPS Multilateral Cooperative Coastal Oceanography Program at the University of Tokyo and let's have a very successful and informative seminar this year to present the results of our research and exchange ideas for the future.

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