

July 17, 2008

Kanagawa Prefecture

The National Governors' Conference hosted by Kanagawa Prefecture was held at Yokohama Royal Park Hotel in Yokohama City on Thursday the 17th and Friday the 18th of July.

At the conference, opening addresses were delivered by Wataru Aso, President of the National Governors' Association, and Shigefumi Matsuzawa, Governor of the host prefecture, Kanagawa, which were followed by an address by Hiroya Masuda, Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications as a guest of honor. After that, the governors exchanged views on various issues with each of Minister Masuda and Kinya Takino, Vice-Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, regarding local administration and finances including decentralization reform.

The proceedings were then opened and the attendees discussed and resolved "proposals and requests regarding the National Government's policies and budget for fiscal year 2009 (the 21st year of the Heisei Era)" as well as proposals regarding the promotion of the secondary period of decentralization reform, the prospects for local government finances, measures to increase the local consumption tax revenue, and the incorporation of the revenue for road construction into general revenue. Other discussions were held to resolve proposals to restore and increase the allocations to local governments, and to secure and increase the local tax revenue sources.

Urgent resolutions calling for "a swift solution to the abductions by North Korea", "the protection of people's lives", and "measures against the soaring prices of raw materials and crude oil needed as fishing boat/vessel fuel" were also adopted at the conference.

Uichiro Niwa, Chairman of the Council for Decentralization Reform, a governmental advisory board, also attended the conference and had a lively exchange of views with the other attendees.