



## Message from the President

### On the occasion of the Pre-symposium

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all.

As you are aware, Otaru University of Commerce will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2011. To mark the milestone, we have planned a host of events, including international symposiums.

Like today, we will host another international symposium under the same theme – Globalism and Regional Economies – in Otaru and Sapporo for two days on August 26 and 27, 2011. In particular, we will have an open lecture on the second day, when Professor Masayoshi Honma, who is with us today, will give a keynote lecture. He was previously on the faculty of Shodai and has been vocal about the internationalization of agriculture. Today, we also have five distinguished guests from our overseas associated schools. They will also participate in the symposium next year, along with our Professor Makoto Anazawa, as panelists of a panel discussion.

We are also planning a large international symposium next year, and today's rather small forum is a preparatory session for that. I hope that the guests will share a common understanding of globalization and the roles of regional economies based on the keynote lectures to be given today and further advance their studies toward the symposium next year. It is also my hope that the audience will have a deeper understanding about the topics we discuss today.

As in today's theme, economic globalization is an inexorable trend, and gaps are widening between the countries that have ridden the trend and those that haven't. These disparities can be observed not only among countries, but also within nations.

Japan lags behind its Asian neighbors in adapting to globalization. The same holds true for Hokkaido. The prefecture has achieved a different type of development from that of the rest of the country. It also has a different industrial structure and a shorter history than the other regions of Japan. Currently, the northernmost island of Japan is under dire economic strains, but I believe now is also the time for Hokkaido to make a fresh start toward a brighter future.

I hope that today we will have in-depth discussion on a roadmap to economic recovery in Hokkaido from various angles. Particularly, I look forward to hearing the opinions of our distinguished guests from overseas about Hokkaido, as they have different perspectives by looking at the prefecture from the outside. I also hope that they will outline examples of regional revitalization in their individual countries.