

Afterword

The global economic downturn has dominated the world scenery for the last five or so years and caused the movements to tackle various global environmental issues to gradually move back. The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ended 31 December 2012 and prior to that for several years, COP (conference of the parties) meetings took place each year for the parties to come to an agreement for the second commitment period starting 1 January 2013, but during the course, countries which participated in the first-round such as Japan, New Zealand and Russia failed to take on new targets in the second commitment period making the Protocol less effective in reducing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The rise in the level of carbon dioxide will not only affect the future climate on earth but is said to be already having an effect on the ocean ecosystem.

In 2012, the Asahi Glass Foundation supported the Blue Planet Prize Laureates' initiative to commemorate the 20th anniversary to form a joint paper and send a message to the world that regarding the global environmental situation, it is now imperative to act. The joint paper was presented at UNEP, UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil (Rio +20) and other occasions.

This publication commemorates the Blue Planet Prize lectures given by the laureates in the years from 2007 to 2011. The laureates during the period have made significant achievements in the field of energy, environmental law, environmental economics, rural development and others, which showed that a multidisciplinary approach including social science aspects became necessary to solve global environmental problems. They were kind enough to contribute essays about the environment and recent developments in their fields. We thank them for their cooperation and generosity in contributing to these volumes. We also reproduced the publication including all prior publications of "A Better Future for the Planet Earth" in DVD as a separate booklet.

The Blue Planet Prize rests entirely on dedicated nominators for their recommendation of candidates, and on the selection committee members who deliberate and judge the outstanding award laureates. The Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank the nominators, the members of the selection committee, and all who have supported us for their consideration, understanding and cooperation in bringing everything together for the realization of the Blue Planet Prize.

It is us living on this planet who have the responsibility to pass this precious blue planet to future generations. The Blue Planet Prize Laureates have given us a lot of guidance to us through the lectures. We hope that you would share their wisdom and take action through reading this book.

In closing, it is with tremendous regret that we note the passings of Dr. Bert Bolin in

2007 and Dr. F. Herbert Bormann in 2012, the recipients of the 4th (1995) and the 12th (2003) Blue Planet Prize respectively. Our thoughts remain with them.

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