

Opening Remarks / Panel Discussion 1 “Future of Philanthropy and Social Innovation”



Mr. Yohei Sasakawa

Chairman, The Nippon Foundation (Japan)

Yohei Sasakawa is known for bringing an entrepreneurial spirit to his work with entities from the political, governmental, academic, and private sectors in addressing issues in such diverse areas as health, education, food security, and maritime safety. Sasakawa has dedicated his life to realizing an inclusive society in which those who are marginalized and isolated for whatever reason are embraced and accepted. Sasakawa is a firm believer in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” For Sasakawa, any type of stigma, prejudice and discrimination that results in marginalization and forcible isolation of people from society is unacceptable. Over the decades he has initiated numerous humanitarian aid activities through The Nippon Foundation in order to provide opportunities to those who would not otherwise have them and has worked to shape a society in which no one is left behind. Two areas of work, in particular, are testament to his commitment and devotion: his fight to eliminate leprosy from the world, and his efforts to better the lives of persons with disabilities.