

## **Report on the 15th World Hydrogen Energy Conference**

By Dr. Ken-ichiro Ota, WHEC Chairperson, President of HESS

The 15th World Hydrogen Energy Conference (WHEC) was held June 27 through July 2, 2004 at the Pacifico Yokohama International Conference Center in Yokohama, Japan. The first World Hydrogen Energy Conference was held in 1976 in Miami, FL. The 3rd WHEC was held in Tokyo in 1980, and the conference chairperson was Prof. Tokio Ohta. This year's conference is the 2nd time WHEC has been held in Japan.

The organizing committee for 15th WHEC started its activity in 1998 by the Hydrogen Energy Systems Society of Japan (HESS) and the board meeting of the International Association of Hydrogen Energy (IAHE) decided the Yokohama Conference in 2000 in Beijing, China. The 15th WHEC was organized by HESS and NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization), and was co-organized by IAHE and FCDIC (Fuel Cell Development Information Center, Japan). The conference was also sponsored by METI (Ministry of Economics and Trade Industries) and many institutes, organizations, societies and companies mostly in Japan.

In this meeting strong emphasis was put on fuel cell technologies and exhibitions as well as the regional hydrogen policies. The interest of hydrogen energy has boosted from last year in Japan, North America and Europe. Big national projects have started in Japan, United States and EU. Japanese automakers have started to produce commercial fuel cell vehicles, although they are in the pilot stage. Ten hydrogen fueling stations for fuel cell vehicles are operating in the Tokyo and Yokohama area. The stationary fuel cells for home use will start operation in 2005 in the commercial base in Japan. All these technologies have been addressed at the 15th WHEC.

Followings are some statistical figures of the 15th WHEC.

- Attendants: 2024 from 57 countries and regions
- Papers: 303 (oral) and 152 (poster)
- Exhibitions: 65 companies and groups

The oral papers were divided into 2 groups. In the plenary session 30 papers were presented. In the parallel session 273 papers were presented in 11 rooms. Among the poster papers, 6 papers were selected by the local scientific committee and awarded at the banquet. At the exhibition, 650 persons had the chance to ride in fuel cell cars, the fuel cell bus or the fuel cell motorcycle. Besides the scientific and technical presentations and exhibitions, NEDO held a session during lunchtimes and an open class of hydrogen energy was held for citizens of Yokohama City. After the technical sessions the scientific tours visited the hydrogen stations and the Tsukuba area (AIST and JARI). One hundred and twenty four persons participated in these scientific tours.

During the week of 15th WHEC we enjoyed relatively nice weather. The organizing committee and I would like to say that the 15th WHEC was the largest and most meaningful conference related to hydrogen energy. We think the hydrogen age should come as soon as possible to reach the sustainable growth of human beings.

At the closing, the Yokohama Declaration of "[Hydrogen Renaissance](#)" was declared by the conference chairman as the summary of the 15th WHEC.