

Third-Party Comments

Third-Party Comments on the KUBOTA REPORT 2021



Katsuhiko Kokubu
Professor
Graduate School of Business
Administration, Kobe University

Formulation of the long-term vision “GMB2030”

The most distinctive aspect of this year’s report is the long-term vision, “GMB2030,” which was drafted and tied in with the medium-term management plan. The vision lays out a clear, overall picture of Kubota’s ESG management approach. In terms of ESG management, Kubota has already served as an excellent example among Japanese firms, but my impression is that “GMB2030” sets out a core framework that runs throughout the various strategies, integrating all aspects of the vision under the ESG concept. As with other forms of management, ESG management can’t be carried out using a top-down approach alone, and can’t bear fruit without practical action at the ground level. So, I think the point will be how top management and staff in the field can combine their resources to put ESG management into effect.

“A platformer upholding life” committed to an abundant society and the cycles of nature

The phrase “a platformer upholding life” connotes the ideal kind of company Kubota seeks to be in 2030. I think this gives to the Group a wonderful sense of direction, unique to Kubota, with its 130-year history in its business fields. Going forward, I would like to see the Group explore more deeply the meaning of “platformer.” To say “platformer” rather than simply “platform” suggests the need to strive to do everything possible to create the platforms that will make the world a better place. I think a key direction for achieving this is digital transformation (DX). Digital transformation is mentioned in this Report, but doesn’t get the attention it deserves. I believe that in the fields of water and agriculture, digital transformation will really determine whether human society flourishes or not, so I want Kubota to shine in this area.

The relationship between sustainability and economic viability

The Kubota Report is an unusually high-quality report that is imminently worth reading. I think the Report could be even better, though, if it included more policies and discussions concerning the relationship between sustainability and economic viability. This issue is also brought up in the dialogue between Kubota’s top management and Hiroko Kuniya, but all I took away from that was the conclusion that both needed to be balanced. Of course, it is crucial to achieve such a balance, but the question is how to do so. A business strategy to balance sustainability and economic viability in the short term will be quite different from a long-term strategy. Similarly, as economic inequality draws global attention, the question of how to distribute economic gains will be an unavoidable issue. I think this is also something to be taken into account in how a company demonstrates its attitude toward its employees.

“If you try hard, you can get it done.” “Do not be afraid of making mistakes.”

I was struck by the words of Kubota’s founder, Gonshiro Kubota, which appear at the beginning of this Report. My hope is that this is the spirit that will animate “GMB2030.”

In Response to the Third-party Comments

I am very grateful to Professor Kokubu for sharing his valuable opinions.

This past February, the Kubota Group announced our long-term vision, “GMB2030,” which has a 10-year horizon, and our medium-term management plan, in effect until 2025. We have prepared this KUBOTA REPORT 2021, organized around these two forward-looking communications, to convey the kind of company we want to be over the longer term. The Report for the first time incorporates concrete case studies showing the total solutions and open innovation the Group is engaging in to realize the vision and management plan, starting with our Environmental Vision, which indicates the direction of our business activities from an environmental perspective as we move toward 2050. The Report thus weaves together our business and ESG strategies.

It was very encouraging for Professor Kokubu to recognize our efforts to give a clear overall picture of our ESG management alongside “GMB2030” and the medium-term management plan.

Professor Kokubu also raised several key issues, such as how top management and staff in the field can work together to put ESG management into effect, how to strike a balance between sustainability and economic viability, and the need to further flesh out the meaning of the phrase “platformer.” He also pointed out the need for digital transformation in the fields of water and agriculture—here as well, as a company we are committed to creating solutions that lead to innovation. We are taking to heart the issues and expectations Professor Kokubu expressed, and will seek to reflect them in our actions to implement ESG management going forward. We are eager to receive further counsel from him.

The corporate principles expressed in Kubota Global Identity are at the core of the Kubota Group’s management approach. We are seeing more and more opportunities both to do business and to fulfill our duties to society in the areas of food, water, and the environment.

Moving toward the goal of becoming a Global Major Brand that can do more than other companies in contributing to society, the Kubota Group’s 42,000 employees will continue to work together as a team to become a sustainable company, a corporate group that is trusted by and indispensable to society.



Kazuhiro Kimura

Senior Managing Executive Officer,
General Manager of Corporate
Compliance and Risk Management
Headquarters, General Manager of
Human Resources and General Affairs
Headquarters, In charge of ESG
Promotion, General Manager of Head
Office, General Manager of Kubota
Technical Training Center
Kubota Corporation