



News Release
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BIBENDUM FORUM & RALLY 2005: AN EXCEPTIONAL EVENT OPENS IN JAPAN – TAKING SUSTAINABLE ROAD MOBILITY ONE STEP FURTHER

The **Bibendum Forum & Rally**, opened this morning in Kyoto. Promoted by Michelin in association with its partners in the automotive world – carmakers, technology and energy suppliers – the event promotes and demonstrates the development of clean technologies and energies for motorized vehicles.

This unique event, in the true tradition of Challenge Bibendum, started with a forum in the Kyoto International Conference Hall. Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado emphasized in her opening speech *“the vital necessity of cooperating between governments, industry, research institutes and NGOs to achieve sustainable mobility”* as well as *“the importance of educating the young generation as future energy consumers”*.

Mr. René Zingraff, Managing Partner of the Michelin Group, thanked the Japanese authorities and all participants for their support. He then reaffirmed the core objectives of this event and of Challenge Bibendum, which are *“to secure the future of people and freight mobility, achieve a sound balance between economic development, human expectations and environmental protection”*.

Ms. Tomoko Samura, Vice Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, and Mr. Yoshitsugu Kunimatsu, Governor of Shiga Prefecture, both warmly welcomed the event to their respective regions, which are known for their numerous initiatives to contribute to environmental protection.

Mr. Odd Gullberg, Chief Operating Officer for the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the *“leading business voice and advocate of sustainable mobility”*, renewed the commitment of its member companies to continuous contribution to sustainable mobility.

Attendees included numerous representatives from the Japanese authorities (METI – Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, MLIT – Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation, ME – Ministry of the Environment), from the European Union, from the

US and French Embassies in Tokyo, from China (MOST – Ministry of Science and Technology) as well as industrial and academic experts in the fields of clean energies and related technologies. Participants in three round tables debated the ways and means to implement the latest clean innovations. For the panellists it was no longer a question of how we do it but how quickly it can be done.

Throughout the day the forum attendees were able to visit a vehicle and technology display and experience test drives with the prototypes present.

Increasing international public awareness of the issues and stakes, related to achieving sustainable road mobility, is an important aspect of the event. Over 140 journalists from 15 different countries around the world attended both the display and the forum.

This unique event builds on the past editions of Challenge Bibendum, and in particular the 2004 edition held in Shanghai last October. Following venues in Europe, North America and China this two-day event, held on June 8 and 9 in the Japanese city of Kyoto, is a maiden appearance in Japan. The choice is auspicious as Japan is one of the leading automotive countries for which energy, environment and road safety issues are particularly important. The timing is appropriate also as it coincides with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's meeting in Nagoya and the World Expo 2005 Aichi which all have an avowed goal to strive for increased sustainability for the planet.

Michelin is the world's leading player in the tire industry. The Group manufactures, sells and promotes products and services dedicated to mobility, such as tires for airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, earthmovers, farm equipment, heavy-duty trucks, motorcycles, the space shuttle, wheels, maps, travel guides, atlases and digital services (ViaMichelin.com). Headquartered in France (Clermont-Ferrand), Michelin is present in 170 countries, employs 127,000 and operates 74 production sites in 19 different countries. (www.michelin.com)

In 2005, **Michelin Japan** employs 1,800 people, operates one plant in Ota City (Gunma Prefecture), produces passenger car and light truck tires and is headquartered in Tokyo.

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