We have a mission: If we want to leave a more sustainable world behind for future generations, while solving pressing social issues and ensuring our survival, we must work together. We must collaboratively make sustainable choices worldwide – and together, we can do it.

The novel coronavirus has had a tremendous impact on our lifestyles, as well as our shared international values. Despite the tragic loss of human life and constraints on global institutions, this pandemic provides us the opportunity to question what is important to us. Normalcy is gone, but in the face of adversity, I choose to see this challenge as an opportunity to reevaluate – what truly makes us happy.

As if 2020 wasn’t hard enough, climate change’s effects are worsening every year. Between torrential downpours of rain, forest fires, heavy snowfall, and overall shifting weather patterns worldwide, it’s clear to see that the planet’s average temperature reached record highs last year. The good news is that many countries are hard at work to control their greenhouse gas emissions, and the Japanese government is no exception. At the Climate Change Summit in April
2021, they announced their plans to cut these emissions by 46% by 2030 compared to 2013 levels.

While COVID-19 and climate change might seem like very different issues, they are in fact of the same. Both are forcing the world to work together to make a change – and evolving consumption trends make this clear. A new breed of ethical consumers is brewing, who choose to buy products that pose less harm to the environment while solving certain social challenges. Personally, I’m thrilled to see that society’s values worldwide are, today, far more in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – adopted at the United Nations Summit in 2015.

The race to create more eco-friendly products, coupled with smarter use of resources, was strengthened by the launch of the “Crew21 Project” in 1991 – a global environmental conservation initiative. And since 2004, we’ve been involved in CSR procurement to improve human rights while giving domestic workers and international suppliers a better environment to work in. When it comes to building a sound supply chain, this isn’t optional. It’s essential. We’ve already achieved a lot, but we still have a lot of work to do. That’s why we will keep working hard at these activities to uphold our promise of corporate social responsibility. I for one believe that we can’t put a price on sustainability activities surrounding responsible corporate behavior. The actions we take in this regard will enhance our brand value, corporate status, and impact on society – especially if we keep our management strategy at heart.

It is with this firm belief in mind that we at the Mizuno Group revised our Long Term Management Policies in 2020. Our promise to you is to keep doing our part to leave a more sustainable world behind for the future generations of tomorrow. This is why we also formulated the Action Principles for SDGs, coupled with a value creation story to further fuel these SDGs. In the 2021 Fiscal Year, we reviewed priority issues first identified in 2015 based on the value creation story’s content. Achieving financial benefits is not our sole, primary goal. By expanding our existing business model to prioritize social contribution, we can focus on international sustainability initiatives while staying fully transparent regarding the three strategic sustainability areas we’re focusing on. These are Environmental Conservation, Health through Sports, and Respect for Humanity.
Each and every one of us is entering a new era where rapid change is continuous. That’s why I find sports an important area to focus on, with its promotion of diverse value coupled with the rising expectations surrounding sports globally. By leveraging the strengths the industry has developed, the Mizuno Group now have all we need to create new functions, materials, and technological capabilities. With these in tow, we can push the limits and quality of manufacturing while broadening our business pillar reach – without focusing solely on one business domain.

One of our key undertakings is to establish a new research and development innovation centre by FY2022. This new R&D base will empower us to innovate even further to solve pressing social challenges – and I firmly believe we can achieve this through the power of sports. As a business, our biggest strength is using the assets we have to develop new business activities, and we’re ready to use this for the greater good of the world.

Since our foundation in 1906, the Mizuno Group have kept a certain corporate philosophy at heart: “Contributing to society through the advancement of sporting goods and the promotion of sports.” More than a century on, we are still as devoted as ever to bringing people boundless joy and happiness through sports. As always, we stay on the pulse of emerging social trends and people’s evolving needs.

In 2021, we were honored to celebrate our 115th anniversary – but we’re still just getting started. Even in 2030, 2050, and beyond, the spirit of our corporate philosophy will live on. We will never stop working to create a more peaceful, sustainable, and joyful society built on the virtue of sports which will, in turn, position Mizuno for unstoppable growth as a brand and contributor to society.

We wouldn’t be where we are today without our customers, and we can’t wait to see what the next 115 years have to hold – with you by our side.

Akito Mizuno
President
Mizuno Corporation