

CLAIR Singapore Newsletter *Volume. 55* March 2012

Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2011

Every year, CLAIR Singapore invites executive officials from local governmental organizations in the ASEAN countries and India to take part in a Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar that is held in Japan. Through discussing and exchanging information about the current situation and challenges faced by their respective local governments, the seminar provides an opportunity for participants to gain a deeper understanding about the different local government systems while at the same time, allows time for them to establish personal networks of contacts.

From 23rd to 30th October 2011, 8 participants from 5 countries gathered in Japan to participate in the aforementioned seminar.

The week-long seminar consists of 2 parts, with the former being a seminar held in Tokyo and the latter, an exchange program at a Japanese local authority. At the Tokyo seminar, lectures on the Japanese local administration system and an overview of CLAIR's programs were conducted in addition to study visits to the National Diet Building and the Edo-Tokyo Museum, among other places. A welcome reception was held for the participants and officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and



• Study visit to SCMAGLEV and Railway Park in Aichi Prefecture

Communications, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the various Embassies were also invited.

For the exchange program at a local authority, the participants visited Aichi Prefecture where they took part in various activities related to the theme of urban transportation. These included a courtesy visit to the Vice-Governor, a briefing on the urban transportation policy in the prefecture, a home visit program with Japanese host families and visits to the SCMAGLEV and Railway Park, TOYOTA Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology and the Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum. To the participants, the seminar had not only been a trip to learn about the latest policies of Japan, but also a valuable opportunity to get acquainted with different people and deepen cultural understanding between them.

Some of the comments and feedback gathered during the farewell reception on 28th October are as follows:

- The presentations on the local governments and on the transportation system are very detailed.
- I am impressed with the transportation system of Aichi Prefecture (e.g. SCMAGLEV and Linimo). I appreciate the chance to travel to Nagoya by *Shinkansen* and to try on the different means of transportation in Aichi.
- Even though I am not the person-in-charge for this subject, I'd gotten good ideas on suggestions for my local government. It is very helpful to know about local governments in Japan as they are different from ours.
- I am very appreciative of the Japanese host family. I hope to have another chance to converse and cook with the family.

Seminar Itinerary

Date	Itinerary
23rd Oct	Arrival in Japan
24th Oct	Tokyo Seminar (Presentation on CLAIR activities, courtesy visit to Chairperson of CLAIR's Board of Directors, lectures on Japanese local government, welcome reception)
25th Oct	Study Tour of Tokyo (National Diet Building, Edo-Tokyo Museum, East Garden of the Imperial Palace, Asakusa)
26th Oct	Travel to Aichi Prefecture Exchange programs in Aichi (Courtesy visit to Vice-Governor, briefing on Aichi Prefecture, welcome lunch hosted by Aichi Prefecture, home visit)
27th Oct	Exchange programs in Aichi (Briefing on urban transportation policies in the prefecture, Linimo (Linear motor maglev train) ride, visit to Aichi Rapid Transit Co., Ltd. and Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum)
28th Oct	Exchange programs in Aichi (Study visits to SCMAGLEV and Railway Park and TOYOTA Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology, farewell dinner and opinion exchange session, accommodation in a traditional Japanese inn)
29th Oct	Return to Tokyo
30th Oct	Departure from Japan

Japan-Malaysia Local Administration Seminar 2011



• Group photo of seminar participants



• A scene from the seminar

Jointly organized by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and Malaysia's Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the 'Japan-Malaysia Local Administration Seminar 2011' was held in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia from 13th to 14th October 2011. The 2-day seminar has provided an effective platform to facilitate the constructive exchange of knowledge, ideas and opinions on issues pertaining to local administration faced by both Japan and Malaysia.

Representatives from Japan who graced the event include Mr. Tatsuya Kabutan, President of the Local Autonomy College and Mr. Shintaro Maki, Director of the Regional Self-support Promotion Division under The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. The seminar was also attended by senior officials from Malaysia's Ministry of Housing and Local Government, such as Datin Noriah Binti Hashim, Deputy Secretary General for Management (as of October 2011), and Datuk Arpah Binti Abdul Razak, Director General, Department of Local Government (as of October 2011). Around 80 participants from the central and local governments in Malaysia participated in the seminar.

CLAIR Singapore provided support in the implementation of this seminar, especially with regards to the coordination between Japan and Malaysia.

The first day of the seminar on 13th October started with keynote addresses by representatives from both countries. Mr. Tatsuya Kabutan from Japan delivered his keynote address entitled 'Current Situation and Issues of Local Administration and Public Finance Systems in Japan', whereas Datuk Arpah Binti Razak from Malaysia discussed about the issues of local revitalization in Malaysia.

The keynote addresses were followed by 2 presentations by Mr. Shintaro Maki from Japan on topics of 'Support for Promoting Independency and Revitalization of Disadvantaged Areas in Japan', and also 'Green Decentralization in Japan'.

A reception hosted by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications was held in the evening of 13th October, and Y. Bhg. Datuk Ahmad Bin Haji Kabit, the Secretary General of Malaysia's Ministry of Housing and Local Government (as of October 2011) graced the event. The Secretary General expressed his appreciation towards the cooperation from Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications as well as CLAIR Singapore for the implementation of the seminar.

During the second day of the seminar on 14th October, 3 speakers from Malaysia delivered their presentations respectively and the seminar ended with a session which saw a lively exchange of opinions between the speakers and participants. Participants from Malaysia have shown a high level of interest towards various issues in Japan, for example, issues of declining and aging population, women's advancement in society, disaster management system and other related issues.

The names and presentation topics of the 3 speakers from Malaysia are as follows:

1	Title: 'Slums Management in Kuala Lumpur' Speaker: Mr. Haji Azmi Bin Abd. Hamid , Deputy Director, Department of Economic Planning and Development Coordination, Kuala Lumpur City Hall
2	Title: 'Urban Regeneration in Malaysia' Speaker: Dr. Dahlia Binti Rosly , Director, Division of Research and Development, Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Peninsular Malaysia
3	Title: 'Public Park's Management' Speaker: Ms. Rotina Binti Haji Mohd Daik , Deputy Director General, National Landscape Department, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia

In conclusion, the 2-day seminar provided opportunities for participants from Japan and Malaysia to conduct meaningful discussions on issues of common interest to both countries.

Through supporting such events, CLAIR Singapore aspires to contribute in providing solutions to issues of local administration in Japan and ASEAN countries as well as India.

CLAIR Singapore's Courtesy Visit to Indonesia

Being one of CLAIR Singapore's most valued and preponderant counterparts in the ASEAN region, Indonesia has attained impressive achievements in terms of economic development and also local administrative reform in recent years. In view of the constructive and friendly ties with Indonesia, CLAIR Singapore conducted courtesy visits to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Institute of Public Administration (*Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri*, IPDN) in Indonesia from 29th to 30th September 2011.

During the meeting with Ministry of Home Affairs, delegates from CLAIR Singapore had the honour to meet with Dr. Made Suwandi (current Director General of The Directorate General of Governance Affairs in Ministry of Home Affairs), whereby both sides had a meaningful exchange of opinions pertaining to future collaborations, especially with regards to cooperation in CLAIR's projects and programs.

Dr. Made emphasized on the importance of promoting personnel exchange between Indonesia and Japan through the cooperation between Ministry of Home Affairs and CLAIR Singapore. Dr. Made commented that "Through the sharing of knowledge, know-how and best practices of both countries, I hope that we will be able to leverage our alliances to greater heights, and I also hope that we could cooperate fully in CLAIR's programs."

IPDN is a training arm for civil servants in Indonesia and has cooperated with Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in the 'Japan-Indonesia Local Administration Seminar' that was held in October 2010. During the meeting with IPDN, delegates from both sides discussed about continuous cooperation with related organizations, particularly academic institutions.

CLAIR Singapore aspires to further strengthen the cooperative ties with Indonesia and promote proactive regional alliances between Japan and Indonesia.



• Courtesy visit to the Ministry of Home Affairs (From left: Dr. Made Suwandi, Director General, The Directorate General of Governance Affairs; Mr. Masahide Adachi, Director of CLAIR Singapore)



• Courtesy visit to IPDN (From left: Professor Sadu Wasistiono, Deputy Rector, IPDN; Mr. Masahide Adachi, Director of CLAIR Singapore)

CLAIR Singapore Enhances Cooperation with Governmental Organizations in Lao PDR

CLAIR Singapore conducted courtesy visits to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Vientiane Urban Development and Administration Authority (VUDAA) as well as Vientiane Capital City of Lao PDR during a 2-day visit from 13th to 14th December 2011.



• Courtesy visit to the Ministry of Home Affairs (From left: Mr. Masahide Adachi, Director of CLAIR Singapore; H. E. Khampan Philavong, Minister of Home Affairs, Lao PDR)

The official counterpart of CLAIR Singapore in Lao PDR, the Ministry of Home Affairs is tasked to implement public administration and civil service management, in addition to promote economic development of the local areas. The Ministry of Home Affairs also channels its efforts in enhancing the local administration systems in Lao PDR, and it is currently studying the feasibility of implementing the system of Municipality in the country.

During the courtesy visit to the Ministry of Home Affairs, His Excellency Khampan Philavong, Minister of Home Affairs commented that "Lao PDR is currently placing an emphasis on capacity building of the country's human resources, and we would like to maximize the potential of our human resources. It would be beneficial if CLAIR could share with us its experience in this field."

Delegates from CLAIR Singapore also visited VUDAA as well as Vientiane Capital City to exchange opinions on possible future collaborations.

CLAIR Singapore will further strengthen its cooperation and friendly ties with the various governmental organizations in Lao PDR through programs such as Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar as well as Local Authorities International Cooperation Specialist Dispatch Project.

Specialist Dispatch Project in Brunei

CLAIR's Local Authorities and International Cooperation Specialist Dispatch Project is a program that dispatches Japanese local government employees (including retirees) with advanced skills and an extensive range of expertise to overseas local government bodies or agencies, based on the requests received from the host countries. Apart from contributing to an improvement in the administrative quality of the host country or institution, the dispatch project also aims to strengthen the friendly relations between Japan and the host country.

Based on a request by Brunei's Ministry of Home Affairs as part of its efforts to promote the Development of Local Specialty Product (One Village One Product) movement in Brunei, Mr. Shoichi Asaki, Senior Researcher from Oita Prefecture's Oita Industrial Research Institute, was once again dispatched to Brunei from 8th to 19th November 2011, following the success of a similar dispatch project that was also conducted by him in Brunei the previous year. Equipped with a good understanding of the local situation in Brunei based on the findings of the previous dispatch project, the specialist was able to even more adequately offer his guidance and insight to the local participants this time, and at the same time personally verify the effects and results that were being brought about after last year's project.

One of Brunei's aims in introducing the One Village One Product movement and promoting the development of local

specialty products was to help nurture talents and develop new industries within the country. However, owing to a lack of knowledge in terms of production techniques and marketing tactics, Brunei found itself facing product-quality related issues such as preservation methods and packaging techniques. In line with this, during the dispatch period, the specialist not only shared and introduced some of the packaging techniques and marketing tactics that are being used in Japan for its local specialty products, but he also made visits to various production sites of these products in Brunei, as well as conducted opinion exchange sessions with local product developers and makers.

For the Brunei participants, one of the biggest challenges that they face while attempting to establish their local brands is how to create a distinctive characteristic for their products and differentiate themselves from their neighboring countries which possess largely similar cultural backgrounds. To this, the specialist underlined that it is important and necessary to put efforts in coming up with a unique identity for one's product that will set it apart from others, as well as examining effective methods to convey these characteristics to the consumers. In addition, the specialist stressed that while it is important for product makers to be able to operate independently, the task of developing and branding new products is a difficult one for a product maker to handle by itself. As such, the specialist advised that it is necessary to have support from related administrative agencies that would help in the development of the product, such as setting up of research institutes and selling spaces similar to Japan's "michi-no-eki" (Roadside Station); introducing branding strategies such as through the holding of related product contests and awarding winners with certificates; and taking note of possible talents with leadership capabilities.



• At the workshop



• The specialist, Mr. Asaki (right), on a site visit and offering advice to the local participants

CLAIR's Specialist Dispatch Program has been highly evaluated by Brunei's Ministry of Home Affairs, and CLAIR Singapore looks forward to expand the awareness and utilization of this project and to continue dispatching specialists not only to Brunei, but also to our other counterparts within the region.

About CLAIR

CLAIR is a joint organization founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 19 major cities in Japan in order to assist Japanese local authorities with the implementation of their international exchange policies. With its headquarters in Tokyo, CLAIR has seven overseas offices in New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney, and Beijing.

CLAIR Singapore office was set up in October 1990. It supports and promotes international activities and friendly relations between local authorities in Japan and their counterparts in Singapore and the ASEAN countries as well as India.

For further information on our activities, please contact CLAIR Singapore.

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