

# CLAIR Singapore Newsletter *Volume. 57* Nov 2012

## Japan-Vietnam Local Administration Seminar 2012

Jointly organized by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and Vietnam's Ministry of Home Affairs, the 'Japan-Vietnam Local Administration Seminar 2012' was held in Hanoi from 26 – 27 July 2012. CLAIR Singapore had provided support in the implementation of this seminar, particularly in the coordination between Japan and Vietnam.

Going into its 11th year of implementation, this seminar is held annually with a host country in Southeast Asia, with the aim of enhancing international cooperation in the field of local administration and creating a platform for exchange of knowledge, ideas and opinion on issues concerning local administration in both Japan and the host country. The topics discussed typically revolve around the themes of local administration, local finance, local tax system, administrative reform, regional construction, human resource development etc.

Last held in Vietnam in 1999 and 2006, the implementation of the seminar this year is timely amid heightened interest in Japan's local administration system as Vietnam is revising its constitution and is deliberating on further decentralization of power to the local regions.

Representatives from both countries spoke on topics such as the development of their respective local administration systems and the various problems and issues. The first keynote speech entitled 'The Local Government System in Vietnam and its Challenges' was delivered by Mr. Nguyen Huu Duc, Director-General of Local Government Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Vietnam. He outlined the current three-tiered local government system and discussed the country's aim of a transition to a two-tiered system following an anticipated revision of constitution in the near future. Admitting that there are shortcomings in the current system such as ambiguity in budget allocation, financial vulnerabilities and operational inefficiencies, he proceeded to emphasize the necessity of reforming the organization and operation of local governments along the direction of defining the roles and functions of each level of local government, strengthening their financial capabilities as well as promoting greater autonomy.

Japan's keynote speech 'Local Autonomy in Japan' was delivered by Mr. Tatsuya Kabutan, President of the Local Autonomy College. In addition to tracing the historical development of Japan's local government system, he also illustrated several key points such as functions delegated to the local governments by the central government, administration of public subsidies, transfer of tax revenue sources etc.



Keynote speech by Mr. Nguyen Huu Duc



Group photo of seminar participants

Following the keynote speeches, Mr. Takeshi Miyaji, Director of the Municipal Administration Improvement Division of MIC, gave the first of two presentations on specific topics of Japanese local administration. His lecture on 'Strengthening the Authority of Lower Tier Governments (Municipalities, Towns and Villages)' touched on issues such as the institutional basis of local governments, division of roles between the central and local governments, organizational structures and municipal mergers. The second presentation given by Mr. Tsutomu Sakai, Director of Local Allocation Tax Division of MIC, dealt with local financial planning and the system of tax allocation to local governments and its importance.

It is hoped that the two-day seminar provided a timely opportunity for Vietnam's participants to understand more about the pros and cons of a transition to two-tiered local government systems through Japan's experience.

Date	Time	Presentation
26th July Thursday	Morning	Vietnam's Keynote Speech Title: <b>'The Local Government System in Vietnam and its Challenges'</b> Speaker: <b>Mr. Nguyen Huu Duc</b> , Director-General of Local Government Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, Vietnam
	Afternoon	Japan's keynote Speech Title: <b>'Local Autonomy in Japan'</b> Speaker: <b>Mr. Tatsuya Kabutan</b> , President of the Local Autonomy College  Presentation (1) Title: <b>'Strengthening the Authority of Lower Tier Governments (Municipalities, Towns and Villages)'</b> Speaker: <b>Mr. Takeshi Miyaji</b> , Director of the Municipal Administration Improvement Division, Local Administration Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan
27th July Friday	Morning	Presentation (2) Title: <b>'The Financial Relationship between Central and Local Governments'</b> Speaker: <b>Mr. Tsutomu Sakai</b> , Director of Local Allocation Tax Division, Local Public Finance Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan
		Opinion Exchange Session

# Participation of Japanese Local Authorities in World Cities Summit 2012, Singapore International Water Week 2012, and CleanEnviro Summit Singapore 2012

In this era of rapid globalization, it is imperative for countries around the world to share their knowledge, experience and best practices in a wide range of urban issues so as to derive common solutions and achieve sustainable growth in the long term. Realizing the preponderance of globalization and its impacts, local authorities in Japan have been taking the initiatives to participate in international events so as to share with their counterparts the essential know-how and best practices in various fields.

In line with this trend, several Japanese local authorities participated in the World Cities Summit 2012, Singapore International Water Week 2012, and CleanEnviro Summit Singapore 2012 which were held concurrently in the month of July in Singapore. The three events attracted a total of more than 19,000 participants from 104 countries.

CLAIR Singapore provided the necessary coordination support for the participation of the relevant Japanese local authorities in the three events as mentioned above.

## **World Cities Summit 2012**

World Cities Summit 2012 was convened from 1st to 4th July 2012 at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands Singapore. Under the theme "Liveable and Sustainable Cities – Integrated Urban Solutions", World Cities Summit 2012 provided an effective communication platform that enabled government leaders, policy makers, heads of cities and industry experts from around the world to share and exchange their insights on issues related to air pollution, traffic congestion, waste management, improving citizens' quality of life and other urban issues.

The WCS Mayors Forum was held on 1st July 2012 as an exclusive event of the summit. Mayors and governors from various regions participated in this forum, whereby they have shared their expertise on the best practices and solutions in a variety of issues commonly faced by cities around the world.

Several representatives from Japan participated in the WCS Mayors Forum, which included Mr. Shintaro Ishihara, Governor of Tokyo; Mr. Yasuyuki Maeba, Mayor of Tsu City; and Mr. Nobuya Suzuki, Deputy Mayor of Yokohama City. During the forum, Mr. Ishihara shared his insights pertaining to the administrative reforms and strategies to catalyze the development of small and medium enterprises in Tokyo. On the other hand, Mr. Maeba discussed about the disaster prevention measures and schemes to attract foreign investments in Tsu City, while Mr. Suzuki talked on the Compact City Model and public participation in the formulation of administrative policies in Yokohama City.



*Japan Pavilion at Water Expo 2012*

The Japan In-Focus Forum was also held as part of the summit program on 3rd July 2012. During the forum, representatives from Japan shared their experience in resolving issues related to declining birth rate, aging population and also environmental conservation in Japan. In the context of environmental conservation, representatives shared their views that Japan has been able to develop advanced recycling technologies owing to the high awareness of waste recycling and energy saving among its citizens. In addition, Japan's experience in developing the Smart City Model as a result of public-private partnership was also shared during the forum.

## **Singapore International Water Week 2012**

Coming to its fifth year, Singapore International Water Week 2012 (SIWW) was held from 1st to 5th July 2012 at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands Singapore. Under the theme of "Water Solutions for Liveable and Sustainable Cities", a series of programs were implemented during the event, including the "Water Leaders Summit" that brought together leaders from the global water industry, and also the "Water Expo" which showcased some of the latest advancements in water technologies.

During the Water Leaders Summit which was convened for 2 days from 2nd to 3rd July 2012, over 450 water leaders from countries such as Japan, United States and China gathered to deliberate on topics concerning water processing technology, water recycling methods, water quality monitoring, water leakage prevention and also strategies in developing water-related businesses.

More than 750 exhibitors and 16 International Group Pavilions from Singapore, United States, Europe, Japan, Korea, China and many others participated in the Water Expo which was held from 2nd to 4th July 2012. The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) set up a Japan Pavilion in the Water Expo this year, whereby a total of 27 organizations including companies, associations and local governments from Japan exhibited their latest products, technologies and achievements related to water treatment and management.

Among the Japanese local governments and affiliated organizations that participated in this year's Water Expo are Tokyo Metropolitan Government (Bureau of Waterworks), City of Yokohama (Yokohama Water Business Conference), City of Nagoya ("Life of Water Chubu Forum, Nagoya"), City of Kobe and City of Fukuoka.



*Japan In-Focus Forum*

One of the exhibitors in the Japan Pavilion, New Energy and Industrial and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) aims to promote the international development of the water industry by disseminating and introducing Japan's advanced water technologies to other countries. In this regard, NEDO has signed an MOU with Singapore's Public Utilities Board (PUB) in 2010 so as to enhance collaboration in the research and development of used water treatment technologies.

"Life of Water Chubu Forum, Nagoya" is another exhibitor from Japan that was established with the objective of bringing Japan's water technologies to developing countries so as to contribute to the international society. Founded in Central Japan, the organization has developed advanced water treatment technologies at relatively competitive costs through active industry-academia partnerships. The organization has refined the slow filtration water treatment technology, and is currently in talks with the Government of Sri Lanka to explore the possibilities of implementing a water supply project in the country.

Japan has concentrated its efforts to enhance its contribution in the field of water treatment internationally, and at the same time, promote its water businesses on a global scale. This is in line with Japan's vision of contributing to the improvisation of global water-related issues through businesses that integrate the advanced technical skills from Japanese companies with management knowledge from Japanese local governments.

It is hoped that through such activities, Japan will be able to share its experience and know-how in securing safe and clean water resources especially in the Asian region.

#### CleanEnviro Summit Singapore 2012

The inaugural CleanEnviro Summit was held from 1st to 4th July 2012 at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands Singapore. Under the theme of "Innovative Clean Enviro-Solutions for Asia's Growing Cities", the CleanEnviro Summit provided a platform for government officials, policy makers, regulators and industry leaders from around the world to come together and discuss solutions for environmental conservation and waste management so that sustainable growth could be achieved in the continuing future.

As the representative from Japan, "Clean Association of Tokyo23" was invited to participate in the event. "Clean Association of Tokyo23" is a special local public entity that is responsible for the intermediate treatment of municipal solid waste in the 23 cities of Tokyo.

In May 2012, the 23 cities in Tokyo teamed up with "Clean Association of Tokyo23" to formulate an action plan that enables

them to actively collaborate with overseas cities which face issues related to environment conservation and waste management.

On average, around 3000 foreign delegates visit "Clean Association of Tokyo23" annually on study missions. Looking into the future, the organization will proactively engage in international cooperation activities especially in terms of personnel exchange (host trainees from overseas, or dispatch Japanese experts to other countries), provide consultation to developing countries and implement research projects overseas.

Over the years, local authorities in Japan have accumulated a wealth of knowledge pertaining to environmental conservation and waste management. As such, these Japanese local authorities are continuously concerting efforts to share their experience and technology in this area so that other cities in Asia will be able to learn and benefit from them.

## CLAIR Singapore's Visit to Department of Local Administration in Thailand

Delegates from CLAIR Singapore visited the Department of Local Administration (DLA) under The Ministry of Interior in Thailand on 20th August 2012, with the aim to further enhance the cooperative ties between both organizations. The Department of Local Administration (DLA) is CLAIR's official counterpart for its programs and activities in Thailand, and the two organizations have enjoyed many years of constructive relations.

Mr. Weerayudh lamumpha, Director-General of DLA who welcomed the delegates from CLAIR Singapore during the visit, expressed that he hopes CLAIR Singapore would play a proactive role in bridging the friendly ties between local governments in Thailand and Japan.

It is hoped that CLAIR's cooperative relations with the Department of Local Administration and also local governments in Thailand could be leveraged to greater heights in the future through CLAIR's programs such as the Specialist Dispatch Project, Local Government Officials Training Program, and Local Government Exchange & Cooperation Seminar.



*Mr. Weerayudh lamumpha, Director-General of DLA presenting a souvenir to Mr. Adachi Masahide, Director of CLAIR Singapore*

# Promoting the Charms of Japanese Local Regions – Participation in International Travel Fairs in Southeast Asia

The beauty of the four seasons, the rich variety of Japanese food and the cool pop culture are just some instances of the numerous topics that interest visitors to each of the international travel fairs in Southeast Asia. CLAIR Singapore participates in travel fairs in such countries as the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia in order to promote tourism to the local regions of Japan. Enthusiastic visitors often pose many specific as well as general questions about Japan, and since the recent fairs had been held between July and September, there had been many inquiries for information on the best spots for autumn foliage viewing and winter sports etc. as people prepare for their year-end holidays.

Besides CLAIR, many Japanese local governments and organizations have also been actively taking part in these international travel fairs, with the aim of introducing their own specialty products and tourist attractions to the people in Southeast Asia. During the Thai International Travel Fair 2012 held in Bangkok, Governor Kensaku Morita of Chiba Prefecture appeared personally to do marketing and PR for his prefecture and immediately attracted a lot of attention as he was formerly an actor and is widely known among those who had watched his television dramas that were broadcast in Thailand in the past.



*CLAIR Singapore staff attending to visitors' questions at the MATTA Fair*

The Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organization had also participated in the recent travel fairs in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, and had been tirelessly providing visitors with various information such as the steady recovery of the tourist attractions in the Tohoku region after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, the stunning autumn foliage in the region, and the newly designated World Cultural Heritage Site of Hiraizumi etc.

## List of the international travel fairs in which CLAIR Singapore had participated between July and September 2012

Fair Name	Date	Place	Organizer
Travel Madness Expo 2012	20 - 22 July	Manila, Philippines	Travel Innovators, Inc.
Thai International Travel Fair 2012	16 - 19 August	Bangkok, Thailand	Thai Travel Agent Association (TTAA)
NATAS Holidays 2012	24 - 26 August	Singapore	National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS)
MATTA Fair Kuala Lumpur 2012	7 - 9 September	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA)



*The Sendai/Tohoku booth at the TITF featured various splendid autumn sights and wonders in the northeastern region of Japan*

## About CLAIR

CLAIR is a joint organization founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 20 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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