



The Japan Council of Local Authorities for  
International Relations, Singapore

# CLAIR

## SINGAPORE

REGIONAL NEWS OF JAPAN

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### Kagoshima Prefecture International Exchange - Opening of Kyushu Shinkansen

**Historically**, Kagoshima prefecture has played an important role as the gateway for exchange between foreign countries and Japan. Ideally situated in the southernmost part of Japan, Kagoshima is geographically close to other Asian regions. Therefore, thriving trade and cultural exchange took place with various countries such as China, Korea and Southeast Asia. One of the many examples of exchanges between Japan and other countries is the introduction of guns and Christianity.

We are proceeding with various exchanges with the Asian countries and regions in order to continue the long history of exchange as mentioned earlier.

Kagoshima and Singapore have a biennial Singapore-Kagoshima Conference held in turn in Kagoshima and Singapore since 1982. The conference has yielded many fields of fruitful exchanges such as economic, tourism, cultural, sports and youth, which are still in continuation. The economic exchange efforts from the conference have also contributed to the expansion of business meetings and economic exchange in ASEAN nations thereafter.

13th March 2004 saw the start of the long-awaited Kyushu Bullet Train (Shinkansen), Kagoshima Route. The new service greatly reduces the traveling time from 3 hours 40 minutes to 2 hours 10 minutes between Kagoshima Chuo Station and Hakata Station (Fukuoka).

Kagoshima and other prefectures in Kyushu are anticipating an increase in the number of tourists from Asia as a result of the aggressive promotion for tourism using the Shinkansen as the theme.

The 13th Singapore-Kagoshima Conference was held in Kagoshima in 2005. Kagoshima will strive to be The attractive southern focal point, Kagoshima, Japan's southern focal point where personnel, logistics, information and other exchanges take place, and actively promote international exchanges focusing on Asian regions.



# Greetings from our New Director: Mr. Chiba

I was recently assigned the post of director at CLAIR Singapore. As is already known, CLAIR is a joint organization founded by Japanese local authorities to promote and support their activities overseas. Besides its headquarters in Tokyo, CLAIR has seven branch offices in various parts of the world.

Established in 1990 to promote international exchanges between Japanese local authorities and ASEAN countries, CLAIR Singapore will soon be celebrating its 15th anniversary and I feel honoured to lead this office as its 5th director.

Before commencing my term here, I was the Deputy Secretary General for the Exchange and Cooperation Department (renamed Exchange and Information Department since April 2005) at the Tokyo headquarters, a department that is deeply concerned with the development of ASEAN countries.

My first overseas posting with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications was involved in the setting up of CLAIR Singapore. Consequently, I have been engaged in many aspects of its activities intermittently. As a result, I feel I have been connected with this office prior to my appointment here.

CLAIR Singapore's activities span 10 ASEAN countries, the most numerous among CLAIR's seven overseas offices. These countries differ greatly not only in population and land area, but also in culture, religion, customs and geography.



In view of this, I believe it is important to constantly evaluate what the most suitable exchange should be for the respective regions, and conduct our projects and exchange activities accordingly.

International exchange at the local level in Japan is an initiative by local authorities, realised by their own planning with local revenue. Therefore, in order to attain real mutual benefits, local authorities aim at developing long lasting exchange relationships based on equal status.

I understand that it may take time to build close ties between ASEAN and Japan at the local level, however, I shall always cater for individual needs of both parties in the implementation of CLAIR Singapore's activities.

On behalf of CLAIR Singapore, I welcome any ideas or suggestions with regards to our work and look forward to your continuous support and cooperation.

吉志 義弘

Yoshihiro Chiba

CLAIR is a joint organisation founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 12 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 April 1990. It supports and promotes international activities and friendly relations between local authorities in Japan and their counterparts in Singapore and the ASEAN countries.

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## CLAIR News

### CLAIR Publication

CLAIR Singapore gathers information in ASEAN countries on various local government related topics such as local government administration systems and policies. This information is provided to local government bodies in Japan through a variety of publications. This time, we have published Singapore's Policy (Revised 2005) and Education in Singapore (Revised 2005) (the latter comes in the form of CLAIR REPORT). These are only available in Japanese.



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