

CLAIR Singapore Newsletter

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Philippines–Japan Local Administration Seminar 2015

The Philippines–Japan Local Administration Seminar, co-organized by Japan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) together with Philippines’ Local Government Academy (LGA), was successfully held on 14 – 15 May in Quezon City, Manila.

Held almost annually in Southeast Asia since 1999, this series of seminar is conducted in collaboration with governmental counterparts of the hosting country, and is targeted at managerial executives and staff working in the field of local administration in these countries, with the aim to provide a platform for them to address and exchange opinions on significant topics and issues involving the nation’s local administrative matters. This year marks the 13th time in which the seminar is convened and is also the 2nd consecutive year for it to be held in the Philippines. CLAIR Singapore is a proud supporter and facilitator of this seminar that drew an estimated total of more than 120 participants from various local government units and related organizations in the Philippines.

Role of Local Governments in Tourism Administration & Development

Exploring the theme of “Advancing Local Economy Through Tourism Development: The Role of Local Governments”, key representatives from both Japan and the Philippines officially kicked-off the seminar with keynote speeches that addressed the structure and promotion strategies of tourism administration in both countries. Representing Japan was the President of the Local Autonomy College, Mr. Kazuo Miwa, while the Philippines’ keynote speaker was Mr. Arturo Boncato, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT). In his speech, Mr. Miwa outlined both Japan’s local autonomy system and general administration of tourism policies, which was met with a question from the floor about the relation between central and local governments in Japan and how they work together in terms of tourism promotion. Subsequently, Mr. Boncato spoke about Philippines’ overall tourism framework and how it led to the revitalization of local regions in the country through economic growth and creation of employment opportunities.

A Look into Japan’s Iida City & Takamatsu City

Following the keynote speeches, 3 speakers from the Philippines and 2 from Japan took turns to deliver their case studies over the course of two days, focusing on the tourism policies and initiatives undertaken by each of their local governments. Japanese representatives from Iida City and Takamatsu City respectively presented on their city’s experiential tourism initiatives that leveraged on its natural

resources, as well as how they took measures to regain the vitality of its islands through introducing new events such as an international arts festival.

Sharing of Initiatives from the Philippines

From the Philippines, Mayor Eva Medina was the first to take the stage, as she shared with the audience about Vigan City’s cultural heritage conservation program that seeks to maintain the surrounding environment and preserve the city’s historical site that has been listed under UNESCO’s World Heritage List since 1999. This was followed by a presentation by the Mayor of Iloilo City, Mr. Jed Mabilog, who spoke on the “branding” of the city and using the advancement of tourism as one of its development strategies. Governor Daisy Avance-Fuentes of South Cotabato Province was the last presenter from the Philippines and explained how the province utilized its abundant natural resources and distinctive cultures in its tourism promotion efforts.

An opinion-exchange session was also held at the end of day 2, where panelists from both countries as well as participants from the floor were able to raise and further discuss on related topics such as the collaboration between central and local governments, availability of policies to assist in local administration and regeneration of local economies through tourism industry etc.

The idea of using tourism promotion as a strategy to develop local regions and revitalize local economies is a common and huge topic of interest among central and local governments in both Japan and the Philippines. To that end, knowledge and experiences shared by all speakers and panelists at this seminar were extremely beneficial, as observed from the positive feedbacks we received from seminar participants who hoped that such seminars would continue to be organized and that study trips to Japan could also be considered for the future.

CLAIR Singapore wishes to take this opportunity to thank all invited guests, participants and counterparts who assisted and supported us in facilitating this seminar, as we continue to work towards building a higher level of cooperation between Japan and the Philippines.



Souvenir exchange between Governor Avance-Fuentes (right) and representative from Takamatsu City, Mr. Hideki Yoshimine (left)

Local Administration Seminar in Thailand

After experiencing successive political upheaval in recent years, Thailand is in the midst of deliberating on and drafting constitutional amendments in the hope of reforming its political and administrative institutions to promote stability and progress in its society. Among the numerous pressing issues is the reform of its local administration system. In particular, there is heightened interest in municipal mergers in a bid to reduce the number of local government units and thereby improving the administrative efficiency as well as financial capabilities of local governments.

Under these circumstances, CLAIR Singapore conducted a timely local administration seminar in Thailand on 18 May 2015 in cooperation with the Department of Local Administration (DLA), Ministry of Interior, in order to share Japan's experience of municipal mergers and information on local finance. This seminar was a continuation of an introductory lecture on Japan's local administration system given by CLAIR Singapore Director, Mr. Masahide Adachi, to Thai local government executive officials in February this year.

At the opening of the seminar, Deputy Director-General of DLA, Mr. Channa Leamsang, outlined the persistent problems currently faced by Thai local governments such as widening disparity between local governments, revenue generation and the burden of a complicated local administrative structure. He hoped that after learning about Japan's experience in this seminar, participants would discuss about the various challenges facing Thai local administration and possibly suggest ways to overcome them.

To deliver the lectures on Japan's experience, CLAIR Singapore invited two Japanese speakers from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) who are well-versed in the topics of Japan's local administrative policies and their implementation. Vice President of GRIPS, Professor Kiyotaka Yokomichi, gave a lecture on "Reforms in the Local Administration System of Japan and Municipal Mergers", while Professor Hirofumi Takada presented on "Local Government Finance in Japan". Both topics proved to be of great interest to the audience of Thai local government executive officials, some of whom had travelled from faraway provinces to attend the seminar.

Prof. Yokomichi stressed the importance of considering factors such as historical and cultural cohesion, geographical proximity between the areas to be merged to ensure minimal

distortion of the livelihood spheres of the people.

Prof. Takada explained that Japan had designed a sophisticated yet objective system of allocation of financial resources between the national and local governments which forms the foundation for guaranteeing revenue for each local government to provide public services at a standard level. Furthermore, Japan's national and local tax bases are widely overlapping so that greater efficiency can be achieved in tax collection.

Following the two lectures, Mr. Masahide Adachi presided over a lively Q&A session which saw participants posing many questions pertaining to municipal mergers, revenue generation and allocation of financial resources between the national and local governments. Using what they have learned from Japan's experience, the



Director Adachi (left) got briefed on the students' activities in Raikong City

participants were then divided into groups for discussions on 3 particular aspects of Thai local administration, namely, promotion of municipal mergers, promotion of cooperation between local governments, and ways to improve the taxation and budgeting systems. At the end of the session, on top of the discussion reports made by each group representative, the Japanese speakers also contributed their opinion and comments which eventually led the seminar to culminate in a meaningful and fulfilling exchange.

On the following day, under DLA's arrangement, the CLAIR Singapore delegation had the opportunity to visit a Provincial Administrative Organization, a municipality and a Sub-district Administrative Organization in Nakhon Pathom Province which is located west of Bangkok. Besides gaining firsthand knowledge of the functions and challenges of the respective local government units, the delegation also went on site visits to an elderly shelter and a school and was deeply impressed with the spirit of volunteerism in the community.

Through such opportunities to share experience on local



Group photo of the speakers and participants



Visit to an elder care facility managed by the Nakhon Pathom Provincial Administration Organization

administration, CLAIR Singapore hopes to continue to contribute toward the promotion of local level cooperation between Japan and Thailand as well as between local governments in Thailand.

CLAIR Singapore's Participation in the 2nd South Asian Cities Summit 2015

The concept of smart cities is becoming increasingly prevalent in the context of local governance, and it is ultimately seen as an indispensable instrument for local governments around the world to reinvent themselves as well as to achieve sustainable growth in the long term. With this key underlying theme in mind, the All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG) organized The 2nd South Asian Cities Summit 2015, and representatives from CLAIR Singapore had the opportunity to participate in this event from 22 to 23 May 2015.

During the summit, the Senior Deputy Director of CLAIR Singapore, Mr. Masaya Iwai, was invited to speak during the Panel Discussion, whereby he shared with the participants from South Asian cities as well as other regions in the world information pertaining to the various programs and activities implemented by CLAIR Singapore, including the Specialist Dispatch Project as well as the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar. The summit saw mayors and practitioners of local administration from the local regions proactively exchanging views as well as insights concerning the implementation of smart cities.

In addition to discussions on the many facets of smart cities, speakers and participants of the summit also deliberated on a wide range of issues facing local

governments in the region. In India, for example, problems relating to waste and sewage management as well as traffic congestion arise as a result of rapid urbanization in the metropolitan areas. Such topics were debated during the summit, whereby mayors from various cities shared their local best practices in counteracting these issues.

CLAIR Singapore aspires to disseminate the advanced knowledge and experience of Japanese local governments in various fields to cities in the ASEAN region as well as India through a variety of platforms.



Mr. Iwai of CLAIR Singapore (third from right) attending the Panel Discussion of The 2nd South Asian Cities Summit 2015

International Forum on Future City Initiative in Malaysia

The Future City Initiative, a notion incepted by Japan in 2011 that emphasizes on the preponderance of cities transitioning to green economy so as to promote sustainable economic advancement while ensuring environmental sustainability, has been increasingly gaining worldwide recognition since its inception. In this respect, the Japanese government has thus far succeeded in devising urban planning models of future city, and its efforts in materializing future cities in Japan have reaped great success.

Realizing the need to share Japan's best practices relating to the Future City Initiative, the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan collaborated with Malaysia's Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government as well as Johor Bahru City Council in implementing the "International Forum on Future City Initiative" on 8 February 2015 in Malaysia's Johor Bahru. Representatives from CLAIR Singapore participated in this event.

The forum was attended by around 100 government officials, academics as well as representatives of enterprises from both Japan and Malaysia. Representatives from Japanese cities such as Yokohama, Kyoto, Kitakyushu, Toyama, Higashi Matsushima as well as Niseko Town participated in the forum. During the forum, speakers from both countries shared their knowledge and

experience pertaining to the development of future cities in the local contexts.

Johor Bahru City Council elaborated on the master planning and implementation of its world-renowned "Iskandar Development Region", which is made up of cutting-edge technology and industrial clusters that work synergistically to propel Malaysia's economic advancement. To mitigate the possible greenhouse effects arising from large-scale developments in the Iskandar Region, Johor Bahru City Council and Iskandar Regional Development Authority stipulated a 40% CO2 reduction goal by 2025. In addition, Johor Bahru City Council also provided explanations on its "Green Neighbourhood Initiative", which aims at maintaining environmental sustainability.

CLAIR Singapore looks forward to proactively participate in such forums in the future, so as to play its part in enhancing knowledge sharing between Japan and the local regions.



Mayor of Toyama City, Mr. Mori, explaining Toyama City's approach in implementing the Future City Initiative

CLAIR Singapore Participates in Travel Fairs around SEA and India

Over this February and March, several international travel fairs were held consecutively around the region, namely in India, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. CLAIR Singapore participated in all of these events through collaboration with the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), where staff was dispatched to help man the Visit Japan booth and provide fair visitors with travel information on local regions across all of Japan.

Through participating, it is observed that while travelling trends tend to vary across each of these markets due to the different levels of consumer maturity, Japan's "Golden Route" (Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka) and sakura-viewing remain a very popular destination and activity-to-do among many foreign visitors, even as interest towards more local regions in Japan can also be seen gradually rising in certain country markets.

In Thailand, which has the largest number of tourists visiting Japan among Southeast Asian countries, interest of visitors at the 16th Thai International Travel Fair was extensive and covered a wide range of regions across Japan, while there was also a rising indication of first-time visitors. Popularity of travel to Japan is also reflected in the Indonesian market, as sales figures of travel products at the "Japan Travel Fair 2015 Spring & Summer" rose 2.5 times that of the previous year, with plans for a second fair to be

held at the latter half of this year.

However, much can still be done in markets such as India, where Japan is less recognized as a tourist destination and many locals still have common misconceptions about the country being "expensive", or where "English is not spoken" and there is "a lack of suitable food choices" etc. With more and more Japanese local governments expanding their tourism promotion efforts within Asia in recent years and going forward, it is important that the quality and extent of information on Japan provided at these travel fairs should continue to improve and foreign visitors will get acquainted with the individual traits and features that each Japanese local area possesses and can offer.



CLAIR staff answering enquiries of visitors at MATTA Fair

The Imparting of Japanese Fire and Rescue Techniques: Specialist Dispatch Project in Hanoi, Vietnam

It is an undeniable fact that Vietnam has successfully transformed itself into a powerful economic growth engine since the mid-1980s, which was very much catalyzed by the Doi Moi reforms implemented in Vietnam during the period. Today, Vietnam is characterized by a high degree of urbanization in major cities, which brought with it a variety of world-class facilities that propel economic advancement further. In this respect, however, urbanized cities such as Hanoi face several key issues, in particular fire disasters arising from the highly congregated residential as well as factory areas.

In view of the need to better manage fire disaster risks in the local area, Hanoi Fire and Police Department participated in CLAIR's Specialist Dispatch Project, whereby 3 experts from the Tokyo Fire Department conducted a series of specialized trainings on fire and rescue techniques in Hanoi for 3 weeks from 2 to 20 March 2015. This is the second time such a project was implemented, following last year's successful program. Hanoi Fire and Police Department has around 1800 employees, and it manages 13 fire stations located throughout the city so as to provide the necessary fire and rescue services.

During the training program, 6 firefighters from Hanoi Fire and Police Department who had participated in a series of related trainings in Tokyo served as team leaders,

whereby they demonstrated various skills on fire rescue to the local participants, assisted by the experts from Tokyo Fire Department. Participants of the program were highly disciplined, and they have ensured that safety measures such as protective gloves as well as safety boots were always used during trainings.

The 51 firefighters from Hanoi Fire and Police Department who participated in the training program were fully committed to learning new knowledge from the Japanese experts, and it is hoped that they will become leaders at their respective fire stations in imparting the acquired skills to their fellow colleagues.

CLAIR will continue to promote knowledge transfer between local governments in Japan and the ASEAN region as well as India through its Specialist Dispatch Project.



The Japanese expert providing training on ropeworks

Introduction of New Staff

Takashi Nabeoka

Hello, everybody!

It is a great pleasure for me to live in Singapore, such a globalized, vibrant and green city.

I'm from Kyoto where tourists from all over the world visit to enjoy traditional architectures, beautiful landscape as well as delicious foods and drinks.

I am impressed with the concept of "City in a Garden" in Singapore, because Kyoto is also surrounded by green mountains and has many places to enjoy local nature in the city area. Of course, I love both cities!

I hope to interact with and learn a lot from Singapore, other ASEAN nations as well as India.

Moreover, I'm enriching my own life with both physical and cultural activities – playing ice hockey and the violin in this equatorial island!



Tatsuya Tokunaga

Hello, I am Tatsuya Tokunaga, dispatched from Hyogo Prefectural Government.

Hyogo is next to Osaka and Kyoto in the Kansai region, with good access from Kansai International Airport.

Hyogo has a variety of tourist spots such as Port of Kobe, Himeji Castle, Takeda Castle Ruins, Akashi Kaikyo Bridge and Kinosaki Hot Springs.

Hyogo also houses world-class, cutting-edge science & technology such as a large synchrotron radiation facility "Spring-8", X-ray Free Electron Laser "SACLA" and a Supercomputer "K computer".

I am very glad to work here in Singapore. I would like to introduce the charms of Hyogo, Japan and have a fulfilling experience in Singapore and Southeast Asia.



Hidenori Ishii

Nice to meet you! I'm Hidenori Ishii from Ota City, one of the 23 special wards that make up the Tokyo metropolitan area.

Ota City is home to Haneda airport, the largest number of small factories and shopping streets in Tokyo, as well as many other attractions. The small factories in particular possess such reliable and advanced industrial technologies that I'd really like to market them to Southeast Asia and promote joint ventures with foreign enterprises. In addition, I would also like to do my best to attract foreign companies from Asia to Ota City.

If you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact me (ishii@clair.org.sg).



Yuji Kato

Hello, my name is Yuji Kato from the City of Kitakyushu. My home town, Kitakyushu, has developed friendly relations with many Southeast Asian cities and local governments through a long history of international cooperation in areas such as water supply, sewage system, waste management, and so on. These days, local governments' roles are becoming more and more important. Therefore, I believe we need to share know-hows on public services between Japanese and international local governments. I hope to continue these cooperation and friendly exchanges with many Southeast Asian cities so as to provide better services for each citizen. I will be staying in Singapore for two years. Taking this great opportunity, I look forward to meeting and holding discussions with people from various organizations.



Yasunori Umezawa

Hi, my name is Yasunori Umezawa. I am dispatched from Nagasaki City, a local government in the Kyushu area.

Nagasaki City flourished as the only port in Japan opened to trade with Europe and China in the 16th century.

Nagasaki is a port city that is surrounded by mountains and offers a wealth of attractive features including food, shopping opportunities and history.

I recommend people in ASEAN countries and India to visit Nagasaki city as it was recognized as one of three cities with the most spectacular night views in the world at the World Night View Summit.

I would like to support further interactions between Japanese local governments and ASEAN and India, because I would like people in these countries to develop a deeper appreciation for Japan.



Keisuke Kogure

Hello, my name is Keisuke Kogure. I am dispatched from Tokyo Metropolitan Government. It is an honor to be given the opportunity to engage in the further strengthening of friendly relations and close cooperation between Japanese local authorities and ASEAN countries as well as India.

As you might know, Tokyo has received the honor to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Since then, the word "Omotenashi" which means selfless hospitality in Japanese has been picked up to show the world the essence of Japanese hospitality. If you get the chance to visit Tokyo, I'm sure you will also feel the spirit.

Finally, I look forward to working with all of you in the near future. I shall be very grateful for your cooperation.



Asako Oshikawa

Hello, I am Asako Oshikawa, and I am dispatched from Miyazaki Prefecture which is located in Southern Japan. Miyazaki Prefecture is called "The Land of Green and Sunshine". In addition, many tourist sites associated with legends of the birth of Japan can also be found in Miyazaki Prefecture. For example, Udo Shrine which is located inside a cave on a cliff facing the sea and Takachiho Gorge which is known as a mystical gorge are famous tourist sites in Miyazaki.



I am glad to have the opportunity to work in Singapore. During my stay, I would like to learn about the administration systems in ASEAN countries as well as India, and strengthen mutual understanding between ASEAN countries and the local authorities in Japan.

Yuichi Sasaki

Hello, I am Yuichi Sasaki and I am dispatched from Sapporo City, a local government in Hokkaido Prefecture.



Sapporo City functions as the core city of the northern part of Japan in all aspects such as economy and culture. Notwithstanding its urban characteristics, the city is also in harmony with its rich natural environment. Sapporo City is known as the "food basket" of Hokkaido, a prefecture where the rate of food self-sufficiency is 200%.

I am very glad to have the chance to come to CLAIR Singapore whose work covers Southeast Asia and India, a region that has seen continuous high growth.

During my two-year tenure, I would like to deepen my understanding of the culture and economic trends in ASEAN countries as well as India.

Kazumi Horie

Hi, I'm Kazumi Horie, one of the new Deputy Directors in CLAIR Singapore.

I'm from Oyama, Tochigi Prefecture in Japan. Oyama is only a 40 minute trip from Tokyo via the Shinkansen with abundant scenic views along the way. In Oyama, you will find rich history, unique culture and delicious local foods ranging from strawberries to tasty Wagyu Beef. It is an ideal city retreat for tourists and jetsetters. Oyama also has many industrial sites where you can learn about modern techniques of environmental conservation and renewable energies.



During my tenure in Singapore, I would like to meet as many people as possible to gain valuable experiences and insights to take back with me to Japan. I've been dreaming of this opportunity to work collectively and directly with people from other countries in a wide capacity of projects. I sincerely hope to become a bridge between Japan and your countries.

Toshiaki Matsuda

I am Toshiaki Matsuda and I am dispatched from Nagasaki Prefecture which is located in the northwest region of Japan, Kyushu island, I am very glad to have the opportunity to work in Singapore.



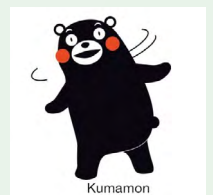
Our prefecture has a long history of overseas exchange and to this day, it retains a special international atmosphere. Our long coastline and rich forests bring bountiful delicacies from seafood to meats, vegetables and more. This is a place where visitors can get their fill of Japanese cuisine. All the charms of the cultures, nature and foods of Nagasaki Prefecture is bound to leave a deep impression on any visitor. During my stay in Singapore, I would like to learn and experience many things, so I am excited about working here!

Rika Okada

I am very glad to have the opportunity to work in Singapore. I am from Kumamoto Prefecture which is situated in the center of Kyushu, the southern major island of Japan.

Mount Aso, one of the largest volcanic mountains in the world is located in Kumamoto. The pure and clean groundwater from Mount Aso promotes the growth of nutritious vegetables and delicious fruits, and constitutes the many attractive onsen (hot springs) that local residents now enjoy.

During my stay in Singapore, I would like to introduce Kumamoto and our products to the people in ASEAN as well as India so as to promote trade between Kumamoto and these countries. In addition, I also aspire to further strengthen the cordial ties between Kumamoto and these countries.



※Kumamon, the cute black bear mascot that represents the spirit of Kumamoto Prefecture.



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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