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Brunei – Japan Local Administration Seminar

On 13th November 2007, CLAIR Singapore co-organised a local administration seminar with Brunei's Ministry of Home Affairs and The Embassy of Japan in Brunei. The seminar was held at The Empire Hotel and Country Club in Jerudong, Brunei.

This seminar aims at establishing a platform that facilitates the exchange and sharing of not only experience, but also know-how pertaining to the administration between Brunei and Japan. It is hoped that through the mutual exchange of ideas among the relevant parties, the quality and efficiency of administration in both countries could be leveraged to greater heights. The theme for the seminar has been focused on 'local welfare systems'. In this respect, around 60 participants from the various governmental organisations in Brunei, for example The Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports have attended the seminar.

Opening addresses were made by The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Dani bin Haji Ibrahim and also The Ambassador of Japan in Brunei Darussalam, His Excellency Hashimoto Itsuo. This was followed by a brief introduction to Japan by Mr. Chiba Yoshihiro, Director of CLAIR Singa-



Honourable guests including the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Pehin Dato Paduka Haji Dani bin Haji Ibrahim, (centre)

pore.

Three speakers from Brunei, namely, Mr. Awang Haji Mohammad bin Haji Abd. Rahman (Belait District Officer), Ms. Hajah Hapsah Hj. Manudin (Acting Principal Nursing Officer, Ministry of Health) and Datin Hajah Adina binti Othman (Director of Community Development, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports) made presentations in the seminar. They talked about the local administration systems, health services and also welfare systems in Brunei respectively. Lastly, Mr. Sato Kenichi, the Vice Mayor of Japan's Aomori City (which has a similar population size to that of Brunei's), delivered a presentation enti-

tled 'Towards Establishing a Local Welfare Safety Network and Improving the Efficiency of Public Services', which lasted for about one hour.

In Mr. Sato's presentation, case studies of the various local welfare systems existing in Aomori City, such as the Welfare Commissioners, Neighbourhood Associations and Volunteer Fire Rescue Teams were explored in detail. These voluntary welfare systems complement the roles of Aomori City Government, which result in local residents being able to receive better welfare services. Participants from Brunei showed great interest in the subject matter.

Social welfare services in Brunei are basically provided by the central government. Services provided by volunteer organisations are rare in the country. As a result, during the Questions and Answers Session, many participants asked questions and expressed their opinions pertaining to the responsibilities and capacity building of Welfare Commissioners, the cost effectiveness of implementing volunteer welfare systems by NGOs and also other matters. A question



Participants paying attention during the seminar



Mr. Sato Kenichi, Vice Mayor of Aomori City

on how the Japanese welfare systems can be modified and implemented in the Brunei context was also raised during the seminar. Overall, participants of the seminar displayed great interest in the Japanese local welfare systems.

**Visit to Japan' s local government by our friends from ASEAN countries
Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar**



The participants of the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation seminar and the Chairman of CLAIR, Mr. Michihiro Kayama (front row, centre)

Taken at the conference room of CLAIR headquarters in Tokyo, Japan

11 participants from ASEAN countries namely, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia gathered in Japan to participate in the “Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2007” which commenced on 1st July and came to a successful close on 8th July 2007.

Since 1993, CLAIR has been conducting this seminar to provide participants with the opportunity to learn about the local autonomy system in Japan, visit Japanese local governments and also expose themselves to the rich Japanese culture during their stay. Participants started their journey with a seminar in Tokyo followed by a

series of exchange events in Shizuoka City.

In the Tokyo seminar from 2nd to 3rd July, general lectures on Japanese local administration systems at CLAIR headquarters were given, and during which they also paid a courtesy visit to the President of CLAIR, Mr. Kayama. A study visit to some of Tokyo’s most representative governmental and cultural sites was also conducted. On the evening of 3rd July, they then travelled to Shizuoka City for more exchange events.

The main theme of the study visit in Shizuoka City was “City-sales and Tourism Promotion Policies”. Participants were given background lectures on the related topics, before they were given the chance to visit the various famous tourist spots such as Kunosantoshogu Shrine and its Museum, as well as Shimizu Port and Yoshiwara Tea Garden. On top of that, they have also gained invaluable cultural experiences from these visits.



Delegates from Bangkok Metropolitan Administration visited Japan

From 3rd to 10th June 2007, six delegates from the International Affairs Department of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration in Thailand visited Japan as a part of their staff training programme. The objective of their visit is to study the international affairs and exchange policies implemented by Japanese local authorities. In this respect, CLAIR Singapore and its headquarters in Tokyo coordinated with Bangkok Metropolitan Administration in locating the suitable Japanese local authorities for its staff training programme.

Firstly, the delegates visited the headquarters of CLAIR in Tokyo and had a brief lecture on CLAIR and its activities, sister-city affiliation programmes, and the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme. Then they visited Yokohama City Government to discuss about matters relating to international exchange such as Yokohama's new sister-city affiliation programme, incentives of new city-to-city cooperation, and the services provided by Yokohama City for foreign residents.

On 6th June 2007, the delegates visited Saitama Prefectural Government Office, Kasukabe Girls High School, and Centre for Environmental Science in Saitama. Through the visits, the delegates enhanced their knowledge on local internationalisation activities implemented in Japan.

The delegates participated in an explanatory meeting hosted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government on the next day, whereby the emphasis was placed on the current circumstances and future trends of international cooperation by Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

During the visits, delegates from Bangkok Metropolitan Government actively exchanged opinions with the Japanese local authorities. The delegates said that they were able to deepen their understandings about the international affairs and exchange policies implemented by the various local authorities in Japan.



The members of Delegation during their stay

CLAIR welcomes 24 delegates from Bulacan Province, The Philippines

On Saturday 29th September, CLAIR Singapore welcomed 24 delegates from Bulacan Province, The Philippines. The delegation was headed by Ms. Flora P. Martin, the city treasurer of Meycauayan City of Bulacan province, and joined by another 23 members who were on their study trip from Malaysia to Singapore.

During the meeting, the Director of CLAIR Singapore, Mr. Chiba gave a presentation about Japan and her local government systems, while Deputy Director, Mr. Anzai explained the current situation of sister-city affiliations between Japan and other foreign countries on the level of local authorities, and our Singaporean researcher, Ms. Toh Yi Ling gave them a brief introduction about the activities of CLAIR Singapore.



After the presentations, the delegates displayed their great interest concerning the mutual exchange and relationship between The Philippines and Japan by asking many relevant questions, and we also discussed the possibility of further cooperation in the future.

(Above)

Mr. Chiba welcomed 24 guests to CLAIR Singapore at the main conference room

(Below)

The head of the delegates Ms. Flora Martin exchanges gift with our Director

Research Team from University of Malaya visited Laos and Cambodia with CLAIR staff

The research team from University of Malaya had a mission to conduct comparative studies on the local financial systems of Malaysia and other ASEAN countries such as Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. With the assistance of CLAIR Singapore, the group visited various government bodies and universities in the four countries in December last year, gaining valuable insights on the local financial systems of each country.

Hereby, we would like to express our utmost appreciation toward the great cooperation from all related authorities and universities.

On 5th December 2007, CLAIR staff accompanied the research team of University of Malaya on their visit to Laos. We were able to actualise the meetings because of the assistance extended by some of our closest partners in Laos – Public Administration and Civil Service Authority (PACSA),

Mr. Siphouk VONGPAKDY, Deputy Chairperson of Prime Minister's Office as well as various officials of the Public Relations and International Cooperation Division. Also, we had a briefing session by the Deputy Director General of Local Administration Department, Ms Athiphone BOUNNAPHOL, who is currently tackling with the issues of improvement of local government systems in Laos.

On 20th December, Mr. Kuppusamy from the research team visited the Ministry of Interior in Cambodia with CLAIR staff. With the great help from Mr. Prak Samoeun, Deputy Director of Department of Local Administration, the team were able to gain fruitful insights towards the local financial and administrative systems in Cambodia.

"It was such a revealing and informative field trip," said the head of the research team, Dr. Phang Siew Nooi.

Once again, we would like to express our sincerest appreciation to all our active supporters.



We have a new researcher: Ms. Toh Yi Ling



It has been around six months since I first joined this organisation, and it is my pleasure to introduce myself here.

Having graduated from the Department of Japanese Studies in National University of Singapore (NUS), Japanese language and culture has always been a focus of my interests. Given that Japan has always been considered as one of the leading countries in their socio-economic, technological and cultural achievements, I believe sharing her knowledge and experiences with Singapore and other Asian countries will allow both parties to gain valuable insights.

As such, it is a great honour for me to work in CLAIR Singapore, and a wonderful opportunity for me to learn more about the different Asian countries. At the same time, with the guidance of my fellow colleagues, I hope to contribute in my own little ways to the promotion of cordial international relations and development.

About CLAIR

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 as well as India.

For further information on our activities of Japanese Local Authorities, please contact CLAIR Singapore office.

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