

Research on ASEAN Countries' Local Administration Systems

One of CLAIR Singapore's duties is to update on the latest local administration systems in ASEAN countries and introduce them to Japan. From November 2006 to January 2007, our staff have visited five ASEAN countries to survey on this matter. In this article, we would like to take one such example and would like to express our appreciation.

From December 4th to 8th 2006, two of our deputy directors visited Vietnam. Thanks to Dr. HOANG DUNG, Deputy Director General of International Cooperation Department, we were able to attend a briefing conducted by Mr. LE TU DUYEN, Head of Local Government Department at the Ministry of Home Affairs Vietnam. The briefing was about Vietnam's local administration including local election and its future outlook. Vietnam is well-known as it is implementing an administration reform through the "Master Programme on Public Administration Reform" for the period 2001-2010. In addition, our deputy directors also had the chance to visit People's Committee of Bac Ninh Province and National Academy of Public Administration to study about the "One Stop Service on Foreign Investment Application" and "Job Training Program for Civil Servant".

CLAIR Singapore is going to revise a booklet entitled "Local Administration of ASEAN Countries" which was first issued in 2004. This booklet aims at introducing ASEAN countries' local administration systems to Japan's local authorities.

We believe that local authorities can deepen mutual exchange such as sister city affiliation through learning each other's administration systems and administrative issues.

Once again, we would like to extend our appreciation to all of our active supporters.

CLAIR Tokyo has a webpage where you can download "Local Government in Japan" which introduces the local administration system in Japan (available in English, French, Chinese & Korean). URL: <http://www.clair.or.jp/e/forum/index.html>

Countries and Organizations Visited

| COUNTRIES | SCHEDULE (FROM/TO) | | ORGANIZATIONS |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|---|
| Cambodia | 27-Nov-06 | 02-Dec-06 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Interior Ministry of Economy and Finance Phnom Penh Municipality Dawn Penh District Phsar Chas Commune |
| Vietnam | 04-Dec-06 | 08-Dec-06 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Home Affairs Ministry of Planning and Investment, Foreign Investment Agency National Academy of Public Administration Bac Ninh Province People's Committee |
| Myanmar | 20-Jan-07 | 27-Jan-07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Home Affairs Yangon City Development Committee |
| The Philippines | 15-Jan-07 | 19-Jan-07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Interior and Local Government League of Provinces of the Philippines Provincial Government of Bulacan Antipolo City Hall |
| Laos | 21-Jan-07 | 19-Jan-07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister's Office Vientiane Urban Development Administration Authority Dongpalarn Thong Village |

Lecture on Vietnamese Local Government at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Vietnam



International Strategies of Japanese Local Authorities

Introduction

Overseas policies of Japanese Local Authorities have been undergoing changes. During the 1980s and 1990s, the focus was on sister city affiliations where the predominant activities were exchanges between administration staff, local legislators, students or cultural performers. But recently, international exchanges which benefit direct local development are increasingly gaining attention. Particularly, there is a rising need for economic exchanges that promote business expansion, investments, technological partnerships or human resource exchanges with countries of continuous rapid economic development such as China, India, South Korea, Taiwan and ASEAN countries.

In this article, we would like to introduce Fukuoka Prefecture's international activities which have been evaluated as one of the most successful examples in Japan.

Fukuoka Prefecture's international strategies

Out of Japan's four main islands, Kyushu Island is the nearest to China and Korea and it has played an important role in being a gateway to Asia since ancient times. Fukuoka Prefecture, being the political and business center of Kyushu Island, is favorably located. For example, the flight durations from Fukuoka to Seoul and Shanghai are 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes respectively and these are shorter than flying to Tokyo.

It is 2 hours to Taipei, 3 hours to Hong Kong and also has direct flights to Bangkok, Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City. Making the most of historical and geographical advantages, Fukuoka Prefecture has been unfolding its international strategy in industrial development.



Silicon Sea Belt Framework

Kyushu Island has long been called "Silicon Island" because semiconductor production here accounts for 10% of the world's production. Fukuoka Prefecture is laying out a "Silicon Sea Belt Framework". This framework focuses on a zone called "Silicon Sea Belt" that connects Kyushu, South Korea, Shanghai, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, where semiconductor production amounts to about 50% that of the world's. The main goal is to develop this zone into a worldwide base for semiconductor production. By this framework, Fukuoka Prefecture is promoting the agglomeration of research and development institutions that would be the brain of the Silicon Sea Belt. Fukuoka Prefecture is specially aiming to be the hub of design and development in the field of system LSI whose demand will be greatly expected in the future.

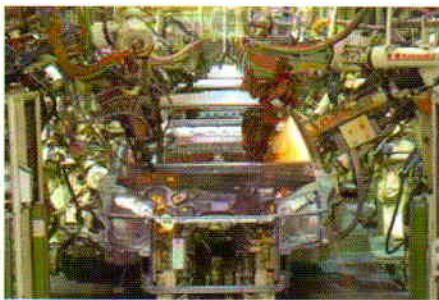


Specific activities of this framework include holding a "Silicon Sea Belt Summit" which is an annual meeting of leaders of this field, and establishing the "Institute of

System LSI Design Industry, Fukuoka” which is a center for training technicians and supporting business incubations. This institute has produced about 1,800 LSI design technicians so far.

Hub for the production of 1.5 million cars

In northern Kyushu, there are many sophisticated automobile assembly factories invested by TOYOTA, NISSAN and DAIHATSU. In 2006, the total number of automobiles assembled in this area exceeded one million. Fukuoka Prefecture made a plan of developing northern Kyushu as an advanced manufacturing and development base by setting out four strategic targets: to achieve a production goal of 1.5 million assembled automobiles, to raise the local parts procurement rate from the current 50% to 70%, to be a state-of-the-art base in Asia, and to be the development base of the next generation automobile. Producing an automobile needs about thirty thousand pieces of four thousand different kinds of parts. This means that the automobile industry has a wide skirt of basic industries. These car factories in northern Kyushu are also associating with other diverse industries in Asia. Fukuoka Prefecture is currently seeking to expand this connection into other local industries, dispatching economic missions to China (e.g. Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangzhou) and Thailand (e.g. Bangkok) to coordinate business needs between each area.



Agglomeration of automobile industry in northern Kyushu



Asian International Forum in Fukuoka

In order to become a 21st century Asian Intellectual Hub, Fukuoka Prefecture annually hosts an “Asian International Forum in Fukuoka”. In this forum, researchers from think tanks all over the world get together in Fukuoka and discuss about important subjects of Asia. Last year, the forum set its theme on “Development and Challenges in Asia: Regional Alliance”, and shared basic ideas about the development of the car industry in Asia and so on. The forum welcomed academic leaders from ASEAN countries such as ISEAS (Singapore), ISIS (Malaysia), CSIS (Indonesia), TDRI (Thailand), CIEM (Vietnam) and PIDS (the Philippines).

New ideas on inter-regional alliances

Fukuoka Prefecture signed a friendship agreement with Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand in February 2006 and another one with National Capital Territory of Delhi, India in March 2007. Fukuoka Prefecture is adopting the idea that independent local level exchange free from national diplomacy will bring flexibility and efficiency to both regions especially in terms of economic alliance. Moreover, intense exchanges and beneficial relationships arising from grassroots level will deepen mutual understandings and may also lead to stability and peace for both areas. It is currently in consultation with Hanoi city, Vietnam for a similar agreement based on the same concepts.

Conclusion

As can be seen, international policies of Japanese local authorities whose focus had been sister city affiliations have changed to take on a more practical role of meeting local economical needs and achieving local development goals. It is also notable that they are considering prosperity in neighboring regions to be important as well as their own development. Exchanges with global perspectives might be a key factor for local development.

Recent Support for Overseas Activities of Japanese Local Authorities



| No. of applications for activity support | |
|--|----|
| FY2000 | 49 |
| FY2001 | 37 |
| FY2002 | 27 |
| FY2003 | 17 |
| FY2004 | 29 |
| FY2005 | 23 |
| FY2006 | 60 |

Japanese local governments conduct various overseas activities such as sister city affiliations, promotion of local products, and so on. To assist the Japanese local officials during their overseas trips in relation to these activities, CLAIR makes appointments, accompanies them on these trips, gathers and provides administrative information for the purpose of visit and provides other forms of support as necessary.

Fiscal Year 2006 saw a sharp increase in the number of applications for support as CLAIR Singapore received 60 requests as at the end of February 2007 (Japan's fiscal year is from April to the following March). That is more than two and a half times the number of the previous year, and a large number of applications are requested assistance in countries other than Singapore, Malaysia or Thailand, areas that CLAIR Singapore principally covers. From next year onwards, CLAIR Singapore expects that the need for exchanges with countries experiencing rapid development such as India and the ASEAN countries will continue to be high.

CLAIR thinks that our duty is to be a bridge between Japanese local authorities and foreign counterparts and hence we would be glad to provide our utmost support to meet the diverse needs of local authorities. We would also greatly appreciate your cooperation in the event of requests for visits to your organizations.

PBMLP visit CLAIR Singapore

On January 19th, CLAIR Singapore welcomed a group from the Provincial Board Members' League of the Philippines Training Institute (PBMLP). 23 legislators, from the Provinces of Davao del Norte and Zamboanga del Norte, visited us as a part of their study tour around Southeast Asia.



CLAIR welcomes 23 legislators from the Philippines

In this meeting, CLAIR Singapore made a short presentation about our duties and our activities as a joint organization of Japanese local authorities. This meeting came to a close amid a lively traffic in ideas and we agreed to strengthen our partnership.

We are willing to come through with your inquiries about Japanese local authorities. Also, we will be able to provide coordination for international exchange such as sister city affiliation. Please do not hesitate to contact CLAIR Singapore in regard to this matter.

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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