

# CLAIR Singapore Newsletter

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## Philippines-Japan Local Administration Seminar 2014



Mr. Atsuro Sasaki delivering his keynote speech

Jointly organized by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and the Local Government Academy of the Philippines, the 'Philippines-Japan Local Administration Seminar 2014' was held in Manila from 15-16 May 2014.

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 providing a platform for executive officials and personnel involved in local administrative matters to exchange knowledge on issues of particular concern in the host country. Organized for the first time in the Philippines, this had been the 12th implementation of the seminar since 1999. More than 220 participants attended in an overwhelming show of interest for the topics which centered on disaster risk reduction and management.

Opening the program with two keynote speeches were Mr. Atsuro Sasaki, Director-General for Policy Coordination of MIC and Atty. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., former Senate President of the Philippines. They each gave an account of the respective local government systems, the processes of decentralization, and recent reform developments in Japan and the Philippines.

Following the keynote speeches, Mr. Satoshi Uemura, Director of International Affairs Office of MIC, conducted a short guidance on disaster risk management in Japan, in which he outlined the main concepts in each stage of disaster management namely 'Initial Reaction', 'Recovery' and 'Reconstruction'. Subsequently, Mr. Atsushi Koresawa, Counsellor of the Fire and Disaster Management Agency of MIC, expounded on the topic of Japan's disaster management

framework and described Japan's various recovery efforts after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

To illustrate specific local government recovery efforts, the case studies of Bohol province in the Philippines and Kumamoto prefecture in Japan were presented in detail by Governor Edgardo Chatto of Bohol province and Mr. Moritoshi Iseri, Deputy Director of the Disaster and Crisis Management Administration Division in Kumamoto prefecture. Bohol province was hit by an earthquake in October 2013 while Kumamoto prefecture is particularly vulnerable to floods and landslides due to typhoons or heavy rain.

In the opinion exchange session that followed, two representatives from the Philippines, namely Ms. Antonia Loyzaga of the Manila Observatory and Director Renato Brion of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, reiterated the importance of the training of local officials on adequate preparation for and effective response to disasters. Many participants in the audience were also keen to learn about certification of disaster response personnel and the mobilization of the armed forces in such emergencies.

The topic of disaster management is of considerable interest to both countries, having recently experienced large-scale calamities. The Philippines still face enormous challenges in recovering from Haiyan, the most powerful typhoon to date to have hit the archipelago. Reviewing the preparedness framework has become a pressing issue and hence, this seminar appeared to be of useful reference to the participants since many of them had expressed support for similar exchanges in future. It is hoped that the successful conclusion of the seminar would contribute toward strengthening cooperative relations between the two countries.



Group photo of the participants

## Specialist Dispatch Project in Brunei Darussalam

Risk management and disaster preparedness are two key themes underlying the core competencies of The Fire and Rescue Department in Brunei Darussalam, which proactively implements programs to train its personnel and the public on the preponderance of emergency measures. With the mission to further enhance the capability of its personnel, the Department requested the dispatch of a specialist from Japan in the field of firefighting and disaster management. With the coordination from CLAIR Singapore, Mr. Masashi Nemoto, a specialist from Japan's Chiba City was dispatched to Brunei from 9 to 21 February 2014 so as to implement the relevant trainings.

Around 20 personnel from Brunei's Fire and Rescue Department attended the training program, which focused on the area of disaster and emergency preparedness. During the training program, the specialist from Japan showcased the latest innovations in Japan's disaster management systems, including the concept of volunteer fire corps and proposed methods to incorporate such systems in Brunei's local context. In addition, the specialist also observed the Department's implementation of its in-house fire marshal training course, and provided feedbacks on ways to improve the course's delivery. During the dispatch period, the specialist also conducted hands-on training on fire drills and the proper usage of fire extinguishers. Participants from Brunei's Fire and Rescue Department showed great interests and were highly motivated to learn from Japan's expertise and experience pertaining to disaster preparedness and risk management. The training program resulted in a meaningful exchange of knowledge and ideas between the participants and the specialist.

Under the Specialist Dispatch Project, CLAIR Singapore dispatches Japanese specialists to the 10 ASEAN



Practical training on fire equipment

countries as well as India in more than 30 expertise fields ranging from fire prevention, agriculture, environmental conservation to urban planning. Please contact CLAIR Singapore for further information on the program.



Group photo of the specialist and program participants

## Specialist Dispatch Project in Hanoi, Vietnam

For 3 weeks from 17 February to 7 March 2014, 3 instructors from Tokyo Fire Department were dispatched as experts to Hanoi Fire Department under CLAIR Singapore's 'Specialist Dispatch Project.' The purpose of the project was to conduct training sessions with local firefighters on skills such as rescue techniques and safety management in firefighting.

Hanoi Fire Department is established under the Hanoi Public Security Bureau with approximately 1800 staff. Some 48 excellent young firefighters in their twenties were selected from 13 fire brigades to participate in this training. Under the instructors' meticulous supervision, the trainees were divided into 3 small groups for their training and they learnt proactively, displaying a quick understanding and enthusiasm for the newly acquired skills. During the integrated exercise on the final training day, the trainees showed great concentration in demonstrating their skills in various types of high-rise rescue operations using

fixed-length and extension ladders.

Through the Specialist Dispatch Project, CLAIR Singapore aspires to strengthen friendly ties and promote a higher level of knowledge transfer between local governments of Japan, Southeast Asia and India. Kindly contact CLAIR Singapore for further information on the project.



High-rise rescue operation using fixed-length ladders

## CLAIR Singapore's Participation in International Travel Fairs in ASEAN and India



CLAIR Singapore staff answering the queries of a visitor at the Visit Japan booth (MATTA)

In 2013, the number of foreign visitors' arrival to Japan reached 10.36 million, crossing the 10 million mark for the first time and setting a new high record for the country. The relaxation of Japanese visa regulations and increased in inbound flights from low cost carriers in particular, have resulted in a large influx of visitors from Southeast Asia which contributed largely to this significant growth in visitor numbers.

Over the first-half of this year, CLAIR Singapore had attended and participated in several international travel fairs around the region, namely in India, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, where we helped to provide and distribute various travel information on different regions in Japan to the local fair visitors, through collaboration with the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) and Japanese Embassy.

Overall, visitors to these fairs showed the most interest towards regions such as the Golden Route (Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka), Hokkaido, Kyushu and Chubu, with the Sakura season in April to May as well as the lavender fields in Hokkaido during July being some of the most popular attractions among many. From *washoku* or Japanese cuisine – which was listed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list on December 2013, to Japan's four seasons, *onsen* (hot spring) and shopping choices, it is through such direct interactions with foreign visitors at these travel fairs that one realizes that there are truly countless things and ways in which one can appreciate and enjoy their stay in Japan.

At the Thai International Travel Fair 2014 held in Bangkok earlier this year, a total of 59 organizations from Japan took part and set up booths at the Japan Pavilion to promote inbound tourism to Japan, making this the highest number of Japanese exhibitors that have participated in the fair to date. With the waiver of the Japanese tourism visa for Thai nationals, coupled with the depreciation of yen and appreciation of baht, as well as the increased flight frequencies from Bangkok to Haneda, Osaka and Fukuoka, the rising popularity of Japan as a tourist destination among Thais can be seen and felt markedly.

Similarly, the Visit Japan booth at MATTA Fair 2014 in Kuala Lumpur was also very well-received, including a

counter that was specifically catered to Muslim travelers and provided travel information such as list of Halal restaurants and mosques that can be found in Japan. From the setting up of prayer rooms and facilities in airports to the opening of more Halal restaurants, Japan has been gradually getting itself ready to welcome more Muslim visitors into the country. Exhibitors from Japan's local governments at the MATTA Fair also indicated that they will be further putting in greater efforts to create a more comfortable environment in each of their regions where Muslim travelers can readily travel at ease in.



Mascots from different local regions in Japan doing promotion for their regions at the Japan Pavilion (TTF)

With the coming of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020, plans for building a new futuristically-designed National Stadium and revamping of the city's infrastructure are already underway. As both the city and the nation prepares itself to welcome more visitors into Japan, CLAIR Singapore will continue to work with our close partners and counterparts in ASEAN and India to further promote inbound tourism to Japan. It is hoped that travelers to Japan would not only be able to enjoy these new, modern and exciting features of the country, but at the same time experience the delicate service and welcoming nature of its people, which are quintessential to the Japanese culture and way of living.

### **International Travel Fairs that CLAIR Singapore Participated in FY2013**

International Travel Fairs	Venue	Period	Organizer
NATAS Holidays	Singapore	Aug / Mar	National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS)
My Japan Holiday – Japan Travel Fair		Oct	Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
Thai International Travel Fair	Thailand, Bangkok	Aug / Feb	Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA)
FIT Travel Fair		Nov	Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
MATTA Fair Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur	Sep / Mar	Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA)
Travel Tour Expo	Philippines, Manila	Feb	Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA)
SATTE Travel Mart	India, Delhi	Jan	UBM India Pvt. Ltd.

# JAPAN SPRING FESTIVAL in Singapore

## – A display of Japanese Food, Culture and Attractions –

During end of March earlier this year, the “JAPAN SPRING FESTIVAL” was held for the first-time at a large shopping mall in Singapore’s downtown area, where a wide variety of Japanese food products were being displayed. CLAIR Singapore was a supporter of the event and in conjunction with the food fair, had set up a Japan tourism information booth at the event area to help promote both Japanese foods and tourist attractions to visitors at the same time.

Organized by one of Singapore’s largest and oldest local supermarket operators, the JAPAN SPRING FESTIVAL was able to appeal to a broader group of local Singaporean consumers who are already frequent patrons of the supermarket. Through respective Japanese local governments and distributors, a total of about 80 kinds of food products were gathered from various regions of Japan and sold at the fair, including products such as Japanese wine, sweets and instant foods etc. In addition to the promotion of food products, tourism information on Japan were also provided at the event area, as well as introduc-

tion of various Japanese cultures such as *sado* (Japanese tea ceremony), *ken-do* (Japanese fencing), *koto* and *shamisen* (Japanese stringed musical instruments) etc., allowing a showcase of the many different aspects of Japan.

CLAIR Singapore looks forward to continue to participate in and support such activities in the future, and to help further expand distribution channels of Japanese local products in overseas markets within ASEAN and India.



Japan tourism information booth set up at the event space

## CLAIR Singapore’s Collaboration with Kuala Lumpur City Hall and Department of Islamic Development Malaysia

Japan’s new paradigm shift to capitalize on the development potential in the ASEAN region has propelled emerging economies such as Malaysia to scale great heights in its pursuit to enhance the country’s competitive advantage in the region. Malaysia’s strong foothold in the ASEAN region, coupled with its pioneer status in the development of halal certification and halal-related industries have caught the attention of many Japanese local authorities interested in learning from the Malaysia experience. With this in mind, CLAIR Singapore will implement the “Japan-Malaysia Regional Exchange Promotion Program” in November 2014 so as to further strengthen the cordial ties established between both countries. In conjunction with the program implementation, delegates from CLAIR Singapore called on Kuala Lumpur City Hall and the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia in early March 2014 to explore the possible cooperation with these organizations.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall’s great achievements in managing a highly urbanized metropolitan city with a population of 1.7 million people with diverse needs, in addition to implementing a wide range of successful best practices in the fields of urban design, economic planning, transport management, environmental conservation and also public health management are indeed noteworthy. As a role model to the other local authorities in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur City Hall’s experience in urban management could serve as an invaluable reference to the local authorities in Japan. In this regard, CLAIR Singapore looks forward to cooperating with Kuala Lumpur City Hall in not only the regional exchange promotion program, but also in the



Courtesy call on the Director General of Kuala Lumpur City Hall, YBhg. Datuk Hj. Mhd. Amin Nordin bin Abd. Aziz (left)

Specialist Dispatch Project so as to promote knowledge transfers between the city hall and Japanese local authorities.

In recent years, the preponderance of promoting Halal tourism in Japan is increasingly gaining attention among the local authorities in their endeavours to revitalize the local economies. As such, CLAIR Singapore called on the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) so as to seek the organization’s collaboration in incorporating the elements of Islamic tourism and halal in CLAIR Singapore’s regional exchange promotion program. As the highest authority in Malaysia responsible for halal certification and the related legal frameworks, JAKIM has a wealth of invaluable expertise that could be shared with the Japanese local authorities.

It is CLAIR Singapore’s utmost wish that the cooperative ties with these organizations will continue to flourish in the future.

## CLAIR Singapore established ties with Johor Bahru City Council and Iskandar Regional Development Authority

Widely regarded as the crucial growth engine that will catapult the advancement of Malaysia's southern corridor, Johor Bahru, a city with a population of around 1.3 million people has successfully positioned itself as the regional economic hub that sees a vibrant concentration of development and investment activities. With the establishment of the Iskandar Development Region, as well as the opening of new tourist attractions such as Legoland, Johor Bahru's vast wealth of development potential is increasingly gaining worldwide attention, including those from Japan. To showcase Johor Bahru's milestones and achievements thus far, CLAIR Singapore will incorporate visits to the city during its regional exchange promotion program, so as to provide an opportunity for the Japanese local authorities to gain insights on the factors driving Johor Bahru's rapid developments. For the purpose of coordinating the implementation of the regional exchange promotion program, delegates from CLAIR Singapore visited Iskandar Regional Development Authority and Johor Bahru City Council on 16 and 24 April respectively.

With factors such as matured industrial value chain, competent talent pool and an environment conducive to a high growth market with global connectivity, Iskandar Malaysia has grown from strength to strength, securing RM 129.42 billion in total cumulative committed investments as at October 2013. The development region is also gaining tremendous attention from Japanese local authorities which are constantly sourcing for opportunities for its local enterprises to expand overseas. During the meeting at the Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) that oversees the management of the region, CLAIR Singapore sought IRDA's cooperation in its regional exchange program,

as well as explored other channels of collaboration with the organization.

During the visit at Johor Bahru City Council, the Director of CLAIR Singapore, Mr. Adachi called on Mr. Haji Abd Rahman bin Mohamed Dewam, the new Mayor of Johor Bahru City. Both representatives exchanged opinions on enhancing the cooperation between CLAIR Singapore and Johor Bahru City Council through the various programs implemented by both organizations. The courtesy call was followed by a presentation by Mr. Adachi, whereby CLAIR Singapore's programs and activities were showcased to a group of senior-level officials from Johor Bahru City Council. CLAIR Singapore's programs including the Specialist Dispatch Project as well as Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar gathered much interest from the officials. Johor Bahru City Council also invited delegates from CLAIR Singapore to participate in the "International Conference on Moving towards JB World City by 2020" in June 2014.

CLAIR Singapore looks forward to more prospective collaborations with these organizations in the future.



Courtesy call on the Mayor of Johor Bahru City, Mr. Haji Abd Rahman bin Mohamed Dewam (far right)

## CLAIR Singapore strengthens cooperation with counterparts in Thailand

Since its inception, CLAIR Singapore has established a very close and constructive relation with its counterparts in Thailand. This is evident in the fact that programs and activities of CLAIR Singapore implemented in Thailand have been very well-received by governmental organizations and local authorities in the country. With the purpose of further enhancing such cordial ties with its counterparts in Thailand, CLAIR Singapore's Director, Mr. Adachi Masahide visited Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Municipal Officer Association of Thailand, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University and Pakkred City Municipality on 28 April 2014 so as to explore new channels of collaboration with these organizations.

During the visit at Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the delegation from CLAIR Singapore was received by Dr. Pirapong Saicheua, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The meeting saw the Deputy Permanent Secretary and Mr. Adachi exchanged views on enhancing Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's participation in programs such as the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar as well as the Specialist Dispatch Project implemented by CLAIR Singapore. A lively discussion was held at the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open

University, whereby Associate Professor Yuttaporn Issarachai and Professor Pathan Suvanamongkol from the School of Political Science discussed with Mr. Adachi on the possible cooperation between CLAIR Singapore and the university with regards to research activities in the field of local administration. The delegation from CLAIR Singapore also held meetings with Mr. Sarana Thepnao, President of Municipal Officer Association of Thailand and also representatives from Pakkred City Municipality on CLAIR Singapore's programs, especially the Specialist Dispatch Project.

CLAIR Singapore looks forward to more prospective collaborations with its counterparts in Thailand.



Meeting with Dr. Pirapong Saicheua (centre), Deputy Permanent Secretary of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

## New Staff

### **KANEKO Tadamasa (assigned by Yamaguchi City)**

I am so glad to have the opportunity to work in CLAIR Singapore. I'm Tadamasa Kaneko, dispatched from Yamaguchi City Government in Yamaguchi Prefecture, situated in the westernmost part of the main island of Japan (Honshu). Yamaguchi City has been known as the "Kyoto of the West" with its culturally flourished streets and sights. In addition, there is a historical hot spring, Yudaonsen, which is loved by cultural figures and is popular for its skin-care bath.

Next year, World Scout Jamboree will be held in Yamaguchi Kirara beach in summer, and more than 30,000 youths will gather from all over the world, many of whom are from Asia.

I hope that I would be able to act as a "bridge" that connects Japan with countries in the ASEAN region and India. Therefore, I would like to interact with more people and learn to gain a multilateral perspective during my two years here in Singapore.

### **YONAMINE Kazufumi (assigned by Okinawa Prefecture)**

Hello, I am Kazufumi YONAMINE, dispatched from Okinawa Prefectural Government.

As Japan's southernmost point, Okinawa is located in the center of the East China Sea. It consists of 160 large and small islands over a vast ocean area.

Okinawa is well-known for its world-class beautiful beaches and is often regarded as "the best resort destination in Japan". The coral reefs, crystal-clear blue seas, white sand beaches and beautiful natural scenery combine to make each island unique. Simply gazing at the sea relaxes one's mind and body. I'm sure Okinawa can offer you "A side of Japan, you've never seen".

It is a very precious opportunity for me to work for CLAIR Singapore. I had stayed in China about 10 years ago and since then, I have been interested in Asia's dynamic and rapid growth. During my stay in Singapore, I would like to promote local level exchange between Japan and ASEAN countries as well as India.

### **OTA Harunobu (assigned by Hamamatsu City)**

My name is Harunobu Ota, and I am from Hamamatsu City Japan. I am really glad to work in such an advanced country like Singapore and look forward to a very enjoyable stay here, during which I would also like to learn more about the strong points of each of the ASEAN countries and India.

Let me introduce my hometown, Hamamatsu, which is located between Tokyo and Osaka. You can enjoy some water sports in Lake Hamanako and eat an eel and Hamamatsu gyoza. They both taste very good! I would also like to especially recommend the Hamamatsu

festival, where you can see many Japanese traditional big kites on 3rd, 4th and 5th May every year. More information about Hamamatsu can be found here: <http://www.inhamamatsu.com/recommend/>

### **MIHARA Kotaro (assigned by Kagoshima Prefecture)**

Hello, I am Kotaro Mihara, dispatched from Kagoshima Prefecture which is located at the southern end of Kyushu in Japan.

Kagoshima Prefecture is one of Japan's leading tourist destinations because of its abundant tourist attractions such as Yakushima Island – a natural World Heritage Site, numerous hot springs and unique history. It also serves as Japan's food supply base, producing a wealth of quality agricultural and marine products. In addition, the people of Kagoshima have an open and cordial disposition, with a welcoming spirit of hospitality which we call "Omotenashi" in Japanese. Visitors will definitely not be disappointed with what Kagoshima has to offer.

It is a pleasure for me to be able to work for CLAIR Singapore. I'd like to meet many people through this work, and I'll do my absolute best to be the bridge between Japanese local governments and countries in ASEAN region as well as India!

### **FUKUDA Shuichi Director, Nagano Division**

Hello, I am Shuichi Fukuda. I am from Nagano Prefecture, which is located at the center of Japan and is surrounded by high mountains called the "Japan Alps".

Nagano boasts a variety of agricultural produce such as apples, grapes, lettuces, cabbages and mushrooms, owing to its cool climate. The clarity and quality of its waters, has also allowed Nagano to be one of the finest manufacturers of precision parts of watches, cameras, electronic devices and cars in the country. Travelers from all over the world are also attracted to Nagano for its beautiful nature and snowy landscape, especially during the winter season.

There are many things that Nagano can offer in terms of either the agriculture, manufacturing or tourism industries, and I would like to support these industries' collaboration with Singapore and Southeast Asia.



(From left) : Mr. OTA , Mr. YONAMINE, Mr. FUKUDA , Mr. KANEKO, Mr. MIHARA



### **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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