

Presentation of Foundation-Assisted Research Findings 2004 Environmental Concerns and Development in Asia



Chairman Seya

On July 21, the twelfth annual presentation on the results of the research grant was held at the U Thant International Conference Hall at the United Nations University in Tokyo. After an address by Chairman Hiromichi Seya, Akio Morishima, the Chairman of the Foundation's Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and Chairman of the Humanities and Social Sciences Selection Committee, gave opening remarks. This was followed by the following five presentations of research results, chaired by selection committee members Takashi Miyajima, professor at the College of Social Relations at Rikkyo University and Kazuhiro Ueda, professor at the Graduate School of Economics at Kyoto University.



Professor Morishima,
Selection Committee
Chair



Professor Miyajima,
Selection Committee
member



Professor Ueda,
Selection Committee
member



Environment and Development of the Regional Community in Asian Mega-cities— Case Study of DKI Jakarta—
Naoki Yoshihara, Professor, Department of Sociology, Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University

In Jakarta, local communities such as neighborhood associations have historically functioned as safety nets for residents. They have spontaneously carried out collaborative activities, which can be thought of as the sharing of poverty. However, with the intensification of mega-city development beginning in the late 1980s, these local communities fissured and stratified, creating significant changes. We conducted research focusing on an area of Jakarta extremely populated with low-income earners. The results showed that the living conditions of local residents are undergoing a radical transformation with the decline in local spontaneous activities. This decline has been caused by increased responsibilities imposed on local communities by officials to “take advantage of calling out,” amidst reforms in local government systems, the decentralization of power, and reorganization of city structures.



Improvement System of the Environment of Human Habitation with Partnership in Subtropical Regions—Case studies of Okinawa and Taiwan—
Takayuki Ikeda, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, University of the Ryukyus

The results of our questionnaire and local research on environmental preservation and improvement activities in Okinawa found that partnerships between residents, businesses, and governmental offices have been established in a variety of forms. These can be classified in a number of categories of differing nature according to the goals of the activity. Nonetheless, in each case, the link between residents and property and maintaining the common ownership of local space is essential, as well as governmental support. In Taipei, Taiwan, a system of community district planners play an important role in the improvements of neighborhood parks and roads, but coordinating the working relationships between residents,

businesses, and the government. In the city of Chiayi, the regional development strategy is characterized by the formation of a community between residents and non-profit organizations.



Coffee, Poverty and the Environment in Vietnam
Yukio Ikemoto, Professor, Institute of Oriental Culture, The University of Tokyo

Vietnam drastically expanded its coffee production in the 1990s, making it the second largest exporter of coffee in the world. Because of the steep rise in the international prices of coffee in the mid-1990s, it was a promising export crop, representing a strategic produce that could be utilized to eliminate poverty. However, prices plummeted in the late-1990s, tormenting coffee growers. Furthermore, trees were cut down for the cultivation of coffee, causing serious environmental destruction. These consequences are the result of leaning too heavily towards economic growth and ignoring the sustainability of the natural environment and living conditions. Moreover, there looms in the background a distorted view of development. Instead, there needs to be a perspective on development that is based on “human growth,” which establishes pluralistic development objectives that reflect a diverse set of values including the natural environment.



A Dilemma between Development and Environmental Preservation —Case Study of the Korean Green-Belt System —

Hiroshi Fukagawa, Professor, Graduate School of Economics, Kyushu University

In order to examine a case study of policies that balance economic development and environmental preservation, I conducted research on the policies and outcomes of the Green Belt system in Korea. The Green Belt system is a donut shaped area set aside in major metropolitan areas and their surroundings, as regulated by urban planning laws in Korea. The research was conducted through individual interviews with farmers in Green Belt areas, to determine the realities of development regulations and their effectiveness on environmental preservation. The study confirmed that the Green Belt does face several problems, such as the need to modernize agricultural management to promote farming, and to resolve the debate over whether or not restrictions should be eased to allow permitting land for different uses. Nonetheless, the program has achieved a level of effectiveness in preventing the disorderly spread of cities, stabilizing the prices of agricultural land and preserving green tracts of land.



Theoretical Issue Remaining in the Clean Development Mechanisms and Prospects of Each Nation

Haruo Imai, Professor, Kyoto Institute of Economic Research, Kyoto University

Among the Kyoto mechanisms, the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) was a measure that was expected to come to fruition much earlier in the process. However, the CDM Executive Board continues to debate important points that have lingered as themes from the time when the measure was originally designed. In addition, many new themes have also arisen from the approved methodologies. The most prominent of these is the question of how to handle the credit that developing countries have earned. In theory, these issues are the equivalent of the problem of needing to respond to uncertainties. Furthermore, some have to do with Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries, while others have to do with the interests with non-ratifying countries.