

Historical Development of a Local Government's Environmental Policy and Initiatives towards a Recycling-oriented Society

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Opening

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, My name is Shigefumi Matsuzawa, Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture. On behalf of the 8.6 million residents of Kanagawa prefecture, I would like to extend a hearty welcome to you all.

It is my greatest honour to be able to participate in ECO ASIA and was given a chance to speak to you at this prestigious occasion.

The theme of the first portion of discussion is "Work towards the Realization of a Sustainable Society," and I have been asked to present Kanagawa Prefecture's case. The mayors of Yokosuka and Hayama, Mr. Sawada and Mr. Moriya each, have presentations to make after myself.

To make the whole story more understandable for those from outside Japan, before launching into the main body of my presentation, I would like to provide you with a short history of how the local governments in Japan dealt with the environmental issues in the latter half of the 20th century, referring to the experience of Kanagawa Prefecture as an example.

A Profile of Kanagawa Prefecture

Kanagawa Prefecture adjoins the southern edge of the metropolis of Tokyo, capital of Japan. The prefecture occupies 2,415.47 square meters, which is 0.64% of the nation's landmass. We rank as the 43rd largest, or 5th smallest, of all the prefectures. Although small in area, Kanagawa Prefecture is full of energy. Its strong manufacturing core has made it a leading force in the Japanese economy. But, at the same time, it is rich in nature's blessings in its mountains and rivers and the sea; and also rich in history and culture throughout the prefecture.

In terms of topography, the prefecture is broadly divided into three areas: the

mountainous regions of the north and west, a central region of plains and plateaus, and the eastern region of hills running down to the coast. The eastern region, where the cities of Yokohama and Kawasaki are situated, is highly urbanized and industrialized. The western region, with scenic and resort areas such as Hakone and Odawara, and the northern region with tourism areas such as Tsukui, are cradled amidst verdant mountain ranges. And the central region consists mainly of the basin through which the mother vein of the prefecture, the Sagami River, flows. Other features include the indescribable beauty of beaches along the Shonan coast, the rich history of Kamakura, and facilities such as the Shonan International Village here on the Miura Peninsula. Kanagawa is truly a richly diverse place.

As of April 1, 2003, the prefecture is home to 8,641,565 residents, comprising 3,498,796 households. The prefecture's nominal gross product for the fiscal year 2000 was ¥30.5772 trillion, 6% of Japan's ¥513.61 trillion GNP that year.

Kanagawa may be just one of Japan's prefectures, but it has a population and economic activity on a scale equivalent to many nations. I would like to outline for you how the prefecture pursued development and how it handled environmental problems in the second half of the 20th century.

Kanagawa: Development and Environmental Problems

- Background -

I will start by reviewing the overall national situation of the past 50 years. Japan's environmental problems began with pollution and the damage it caused—that is to say, with industrial pollution. Major industrial pollution problems began occurring around the end of the 19th century as the modernization of industry progressed. Some of the most serious cases involved poisoning caused by copper mining, such as the Ashio Copper Mine Pollution Case.

By the middle of the 1950s, factories had been reconstructed in Tokyo, Osaka and other major cities damaged during the war and Japan's industrial production had recovered to pre-World War II levels. Economic development had progressed to the point that popular sentiment was that the country was no longer in a "post-war" period. But public hazards began to emerge in the form of air, water and noise pollution.

With the government's adoption of a high economic growth policy in 1961, Japan was set to run a race to economic development at full speed that saw the country confronted by serious damage from industrial pollution around the nation by the middle of the decade.

Minamata disease broke out along the Minamata Bay and Shiranui Sea

coastlines in Kumamoto Prefecture, as well as in the Asano River basin in Niigata Prefecture. In Toyama Prefecture, Itai-itai disease emerged along the Jintsu River. And Yokkaichi City in Mie Prefecture became synonymous with a widespread occurrence of asthma and symptoms of respiratory disease. These four incidents became known as Japan's "Four Major Industrial Pollution Cases".

The nation came to be regularly referred to as the "Industrial Pollution Archipelago", and local governments' handling of industrial pollution problems became an important issue. Antipollution movements spread like wildfire throughout the country. In 1958, Japan enacted its first anti-pollution laws: the "Two Water Quality Laws", the Water Quality Conservation Law and the Factory Effluent Control Law. But these laws proved to be ineffective as their provisions were deficient in several regards, such as setting limits only on concentrations rather than regulating total pollutant loads. Local governments therefore began taking various measures to control industrial pollution by issuing guidelines and providing administrative guidance. This means that where there are no corresponding laws, restrictions are set according to local government administrative principles in accordance with the concept of "civil minimum", and, where there are applicable laws, the provisions of such laws are enforced under stricter interpretations by "topping-up" or "stretching" the rules. The general process of pollution control in Japan was for action to be initiated at the municipal level, then be taken up by prefectural governments, the highest level of local government, and gather momentum until the national government found itself in the position where there was no choice but to follow. So, we can see that local government has always played an important role in the control of industrial pollution.

In the 1970s, a fully-fledged legislative framework for controlling pollution came into being, with 14 new or revised laws relating to pollution passing through the National Diet in its 1970 session, the so-called "Pollution Diet". This added momentum to the initiatives being taken at the local level. The corporate sector became involved, actively engaging in the development of antipollution technology and investing in pollution prevention. Together these activities saw the onslaught of industrial pollution problems effectively subside. The OECD's 1976 review of Japan's efforts to implement its environmental policies found that the nation had adequately accomplished its goals for the time being. In the prevailing general economic climate, despite occasional interruptions such as the oil shocks, it was even said that industrial pollution was no longer an issue and people's concern with environmental management and control of industrial pollution generally faded away.

At the local level, however, the construction and expansion of expressways, widening of local trunk roads, construction of large-scale housing developments and various other activities, intensified urbanization and gave rise to various urban problems, such as the handling of solid wastes. Industrial pollution might have been brought under control, but in its place the amenities and quality of urban life

degenerated. To resolve problems associated with urbanization, urban infrastructure must be improved, but cost and other constraints have kept any visible progress from being made. Local governments did try to tackle the problems of the urban and natural environments through environmental management plans, but these actions seen to have fallen into oblivion along with the collapse of the economic bubble.

From the end of the 1980s, attention began to focus on environmental issues closely related to the 20th century pattern of economic development through "mass production, mass consumption, and mass disposal" on which social and economic trends were so dependent. One major focus was global environmental problems such as global warming, and another was the issue of waste disposal. These differ from industrial pollution cases in that the cause of the damage can not usually be traced back to a specific source. Industrial activities represent only one of many causes; various aspects of our daily lives, including obtaining the very basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing, are all sources of pollution that we need to consider individually. If the requirements of our daily lives give rise to these problems, then it is important that action be taken at the local government level—where we actually live our lives. And so, I believe, local government will have an increasingly important role to play.

If we now take up the main theme for this session, establishing a "recycling-based society", Japan has enacted the "Basic Law for Establishing a Recycling-based Society" under the ambit of the Basic Environment Law to provide the basic legislative framework for dealing with issues in this area. At the national level, legal backing for recycling has been established in a series of laws that should stimulate public commitment to the undertaking: the Waste Management and Public Cleansing Law provides for the appropriate treatment of wastes; the Law for the Promotion of Recyclable Resources promotes further involvement in recycling; and the Law for Promotion of Sorted Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging (the Packaging Recycling Law) together with the Law for Recycling of Specified Kinds of Home Appliances (the Home Appliance Recycling Law) promote recycling in the manner appropriate to various classes of goods. To support these goals from the procurement side, the nation has also enacted the Law Concerning the Promotion of Procurement of Eco-Friendly Goods and Services by the State and Other Entities (Green Purchasing Law).

The primary focus of these laws is to require the corporate sector to engage in environmental measures to the fullest extent of their technological and financial capacity, and the regulations call for regular auditing of actions taken. The national government and local governments are, of course, required to act in accordance with the provisions of these laws, and, if we are to accomplish our task of establishing a recycling-based society as a whole, every piece of the fabric of our society – consumers, corporations and national and local governments – must commit itself to accomplishing the task in cooperation with the others.

- Kanagawa Prefecture's Environmental Policies -

Looking now at the local level, Kanagawa Prefecture's efforts in the latter half of the 20th century took place in three stages beginning with the prevention of industrial pollution, shifting from prevention to environmental conservation through the development of comprehensive environmental administration, and then responding to new kinds of environmental problems.

In the first stage, when measures to counter industrial pollution were put in place, the prefecture took regulatory action beginning with the 1951 Kanagawa Prefecture Enterprise Pollution Control Ordinance, followed by the Kanagawa Prefecture Industrial Pollution Control Ordinance in 1964 and the Kanagawa Prefecture Environmental Pollution Countermeasures Ordinance in 1971. During this period factories and businesses were required by prefectural regulations to undertake an extensive range of measures to prevent damage to community health and degradation of the local environment.

Having experienced a series of problems that affected public health and water quality in the rivers and the sea along the Keihin Coastal Zone, the industrial belt in which the cities of Yokohama and Kawasaki are located, Kanagawa Prefecture drew up the Ogishima Pollution Prevention Agreement which, although it was not the nation's first, was a comprehensive agreement on industrial development. Our 1951 Kanagawa Prefecture Enterprise Pollution Control Ordinance was, in fact, Japan's first local ordinance to contain provisions for ensuring harmony between industrial development and the well-being of residents. Over 1,600 disputes concerning industrial pollution were handled under this ordinance up to 1963.

The next stage saw a shift from pollution prevention to environmental protection. It began with the enactment of two prefectural laws, the 1971 Basic Ordinance for Securing a Good Environment and the 1972 Nature Conservation Ordinance, at a time when we needed to act to halt the damage being done to the natural environment throughout the country in the wake of unbridled development and focus on the conservation and restoration of the natural environment in the face of the drastic loss of nature that accompanied rapid economic growth.

In 1980 we enacted the Kanagawa Prefecture Ordinance on Environmental Impact Assessment. The intent was to enable us to forecast and assess the impact that a development or business plan of greater than a certain scale might have on the environment so that we would be able to maintain our environment in an acceptable condition from an environmental conservation viewpoint.

In 1983, we took a further step forward and introduced the Kanagawa Environment Plan, a guideline for protecting nature and nurturing an environment

suitable for us to live in. The focus of the guidelines is to provide individuals, industry and government with a set of goals and a guide to reaching them so that adequate attention is given to the environmental aspects of all plans, development projects or other initiatives from the moment of their conception.

The next stage started in 1992, the year of the Earth Summit. The time had come for the entire world to work together to deal with global environmental problems, which had been becoming increasingly serious ever since the beginning of the 1980s. The adoption of Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit as an action plan committing mankind to the task of accomplishing sustainable development. Following the Agenda 21 recommendations, local governments initiated their own local agenda formulation process. This prefecture adopted Agenda 21 Kanagawa in 1993. It had been created as a result of the joint effort of over 90 groups of people, including municipalities, corporate organizations and citizens' groups, that had come together and formed the Kanagawa Global Environment Conservation Promotion Forum through which they contributed their opinions on the drawing up of the Agenda 21 Kanagawa document.

Once our Local Agenda 21 had been formulated, we reviewed our existing policy framework and adopted the Kanagawa Prefecture Basic Environment Ordinance in 1996. These regulations were drafted against a background in which environmental issues had expanded from disrupting urban lifestyles to being a matter of global concern, and set out the prefecture's basic principles with regard to environmental conservation and creation, the respective responsibilities of prefectural and municipal governments, industry and citizens, and other basic matters in the implementation of our environmental policies. The aim of the Ordinance is to facilitate participation in the implementation of policies on environmental conservation and creation in a comprehensive and systematic manner in order to secure a healthy, safe and culturally-rich way of life for every member of the prefecture now and into the future. In its preamble, the Ordinance outlines the concept of environmental rights as well as people's responsibility to pass on a sound environment. The ordinance also sets out comprehensive approaches to implementing policies and projects from the planning stage; promoting self-regulated environmental management in business and prefectural government, and independent local government programs for international cooperation.

In 1997, Kanagawa Prefecture enacted its Basic Environment Plan with the aim of having Kanagawa become an "environmental conservation-oriented community" supported by its environmental policy of encouraging "initiative, cooperation and participation", and we are now engaged in efforts to enhance and strengthen the measures we take under the Basic Plan.

We are also reviewing our "Agenda 21 Kanagawa" in the light of last year's Johannesburg Summit so that our environmental efforts will be stepped up "from

planning to taking action”.

To summarize our past environmental efforts, in which we have had a certain degree of success, the two decades beginning in 1951 were characterized by “industrial pollution countermeasures”, the following two decades from 1971 onward saw the focus shift “from industrial pollution to environmental concerns” and the “development of comprehensive environmental policies”, and finally, from 1992, the keyword has been “facing up to new environmental problems”.

Kanagawa Prefecture's Initiatives towards a Recycling-based Society

As everyone is aware, humans consume various kinds of natural resources taken from the Earth to conduct their daily lives. Japan, for instance, pours 2.13 billion tons of resources annually (figures for the year 2000) into establishing social infrastructure and producing and consuming goods. One consequence of these activities is the emission of carbon dioxide and the release of other wastes into the natural environment. Because the Earth's resources are limited, how effectively they are used and how the generation of waste is reduced is going to be the key to the accomplishment of sustainable development. In order for human beings to continue to survive on this planet, it is imperative that we convert our society into a recycling-oriented one as soon as possible. One important task in accomplishing that is to find solutions for handling waste.

The total volume of general waste generated in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1998 was 3.74 million tons, which was a 22% increase on the volume generated in 1987. The volume of industrial waste, on the other hand, in 1998 was 18.45 million tons—a 20% reduction on the previous year. The combined total of general and industrial waste (22.19 million tons) was 15% less than in 1987. When it comes to recycling, the ratio achieved has been running at around 30%. Our ratio of waste reduction through intermediate processing is 55%, some ten percentage points higher than the national average. These efforts have enabled us to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill and other final disposal to 2.78 million tons, giving us a ratio of final disposal to total waste volume of just 13%, 15% less than the national average.

Looking at final disposal in more detail, we process 1.19 million tons of waste within the prefecture, discharge 1.15 million tons into the sea and send the remaining 0.44 million tons outside the prefecture for processing. However, these disposal methods are under increasing pressure with international opposition to marine disposal intensifying and restrictions on movement of wastes to other prefectures becoming tighter.

In response to this, we are developing various measures in collaboration with citizens, businesses and individual municipalities to pursue the “3Rs” —reduce,

re-use, recycle— in accordance with the Kanagawa Prefecture Waste Processing Plan which was formulated in March 2002 with the fundamental goal of achieving 100% local processing of waste.

First, as a means of reducing the generation of wastes, we are working on establishing systems that encourage effective use of resources through the use of resource-saving, long-life products and the re-use of goods. We are also working on preventing disposable materials going into households by taking appropriate measures to discourage excessive wrapping and packaging, to promote the composting of raw garbage, and to ensure that reusable and recyclable goods are collected separately. To reduce industrial wastes, the prefecture has been taking measures to promote projects that will encourage and strengthen self-management of waste by collecting and disseminating information on advanced mechanisms and other approaches. We are also working on extending the life of public and semi-public buildings by improving their durability and undertaking building maintenance. Kanagawa Prefecture has been actively lobbying the national government to promote efforts to obtain ISO14001 accreditation and to introduce various economic incentives, including deposit systems.

To facilitate recycling activities, we are encouraging the recycling of general waste by promoting recyclable waste collection as a business for independent operators or as community-based initiatives carried out in collaboration with municipal governments. We are also working on fostering the recycling of industrial wastes by recycling construction materials, reusing construction- and manufacturing-related sludge and reusing dehydrated waterworks sludge and incinerated sewage sludge as ingredients in making cement.

In order to foster the recycling of resources we are taking measures to facilitate systems for recycling wastes between businesses across the entire prefecture so that the wastes from one business can be reused or recycled by another. We are also promoting the green-purchase initiatives.

Our local and Electric Appliances Recycling Ordinance, are proceeding smoothly. In addition to these initiatives, we are also engaged in establishing safe and reliable waste processing systems by grouping municipalities in the prefecture into blocks and encouraging each block to take initiatives in accordance with the conditions unique to the locality on the basis of the prefecture's Integral Solid Waste Processing Plan.

We are, furthermore, promoting environment-related research and development efforts seeking ways to recycle categories of wastes for which recycling methods are not yet available. We have already launched some projects as collaborative undertakings between the government, academic and private sectors to develop a technology to re-use plastic waste as a high-efficiency petrochemical raw material

and to find ways to recycle wooden products.

The starting point for all these initiatives is the notion that every aspect of our daily life and daily business activities involves disposal of wastes so that, therefore, individual citizens, business operators, and local government must voluntarily act to seek solutions for problems of waste disposal. Accordingly, every actor must be assigned a role, and they must all then work together to combat waste problems.

Conclusion

Having introduced the initiatives we are taking in order to transform Kanagawa Prefecture into a recycling-oriented community, I would like to conclude by sharing with you our focus for action in the future.

Earlier, I emphasized the importance of collaboration between residents, business and local governments. This remains true in the 21st century, a century often referred to as the “Environment Century”. We must develop new initiatives with all sectors of society forming a partnership to solve the difficult problems that face us.

An example of this is forest conservation. Forests cover approximately 40% of this prefecture, and we are working on “making forests for water resources” to improve their water catchment functions in order to ensure that we have a stable supply of good quality water in future. To maintain this common property in good condition, our citizens, businesses and local governments have to work together with each other and the owners of the forests. To facilitate this, we have established a system under which members of the community and the business sector take part in various volunteer activities working in conjunction with the local administration as partners in maintaining the forests as a source of water resources.

I believe that partnerships between individual actors must be based at the local level, but also are formed at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, as well as at the global level. In today’s international society, with globalization proceeding rapidly, it is highly desirable that we establish “outward-reaching partnerships” that extend beyond national borders.

For instance, what role should Japan play in the Asia-Pacific region? Japan’s experience with severe cases of industrial pollution earned it the sobriquet of “Pollution Archipelago”, but we overcame that situation. If we shared the experiences we suffered with other countries in the region, that would surely assist those countries to accomplish the task of realizing sustainable development without having to make any painful detours. It would be truly meaningful if our local governments

could reach beyond national borders to share the experiences they have had and the knowledge they have accumulated.

Last April, Kanagawa Prefecture, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Environment, hosted the International Environmental Symposium for Asian Local Governments. Fourteen local government representatives from 10 Asian nations and 4 NPO representatives reviewed the details of initiatives being taken by governments and organizations since the Earth Summit and discussed what Asian local governments should aim for now and in the future, and how they might collaborate. The outcome of the discussions was summarized in the unanimously-adopted Kanagawa Declaration and a Kanagawa Declaration Network has been formed to oversee the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration, which was registered at the Johannesburg Summit as a Type 2 Document.

The Kanagawa Declaration Network has provided the basis for several initiatives. In November 2002, we welcomed a group of government officials from Kyonggi Province in Korea for a training seminar, and we have been conducting study seminars for environmental conservation and improvement staff from Thailand and Vietnam since 1999. Since 2001 we have been accepting participants from local governments and NGOs in related countries and we hope that local governments from other countries will also take advantage of these occasions so that the seminars will be able to contribute to the progress of sustainable development in the Asian region.

What I would like to emphasize in closing is that today's environmental issues, whether local or global, cannot be solved by the efforts of a single actor, such as a government. Every party should be aware of its own role and they all should bear the responsibility of taking initiatives aiming at the same goal, coming together to form internal and external partnerships. I sincerely hope that all local governments, corporations and NGOs not only within the prefecture but also those from throughout the country as well as from the countries within the Asia Pacific Region will get together to make the 21st century one that is truly deserving of the title, "Environment Century".

I conclude my speech with the hope that a frank exchange of opinions at this 11th ECOASIA meeting will serve as the impetus for further initiatives for environmental conservation and improvement in the Asia-Pacific region of today and the future.

Thank you all for your kind attention.