

KODOMO Ramsar:  
International Wetlands Exchange Program,  
a driving force of ESD at the Ramsar Sites in Asia



Reiko Nakamura  
Secretary-General, Ramsar Center Japan (RCJ)



## RCJ in brief

- Establishment: 12 May 1990  
The year that Japan applied for hosting the Ramsar COP5 (1993), in Kushiro, Japan
- Non-governmental Organization
- Membership organization:  
Approx. 110 individual members from countries/areas such as Australia, Bangladesh, China, Taiwan, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand.
- Secretariat: Tokyo, Japan
- Active region: Wetlands in Asia

## Its Mission

To promote the wise use of wetlands and foster the mission of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) in Asia by enhancing CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness).

## Two main CEPA activities of RCJ

### (1) Asian Wetland Symposia

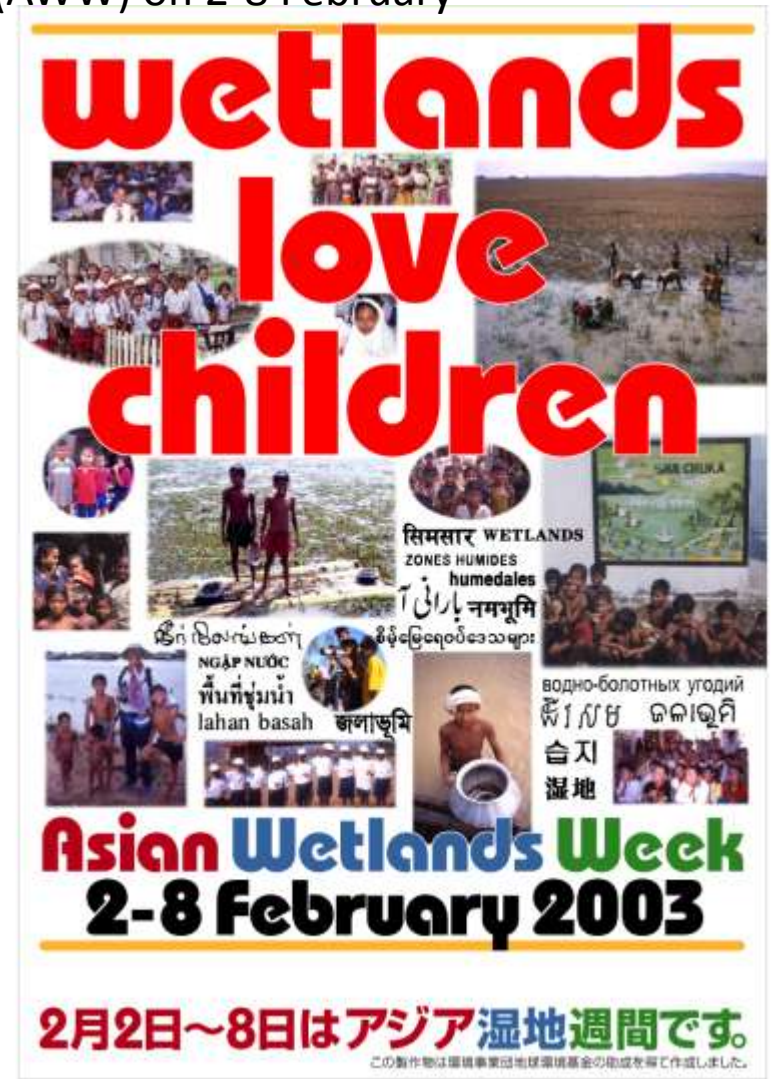
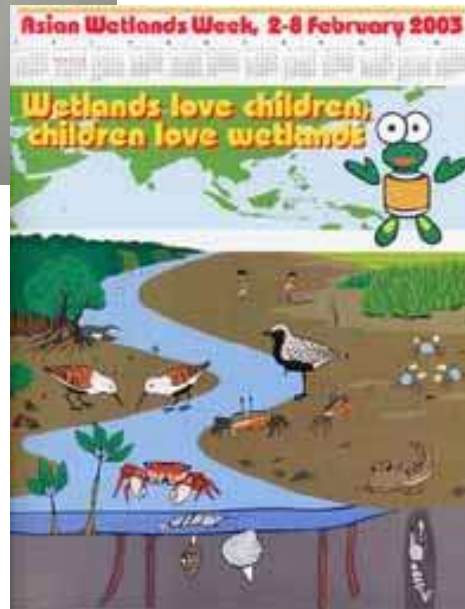
- A single platform for discussions among various sectors including national and local governments, NGOs, scientific experts, the private sector and local and indigenous peoples engaged in wetlands.
- Six meetings have been organized in Japan, Malaysia, India, Vietnam and China between 1992 -2011.
- Their recommendations have been reported to Ramsar COP5, COP8, COP9, COP10 and COP11 respectively.

### (2) KODOMO (Children) Ramsar: International Wetlands Exchange

- Environmental education and exchange programs at Ramsar sites in Japan and other Asian countries.
- Focusing on children living around Ramsar sites in Japan and other Asian countries where they have a history of proactive conservation of wetlands.
- Aiming to build the capacity of KODOMO leaders who will be leading the children, and facilitators who will be supporting the children.

# Children and Wetlands Exchange Program (2002-)

- Joint activity among RCJ, Wetlands International –China, Pusan University and Seoul University
- Putting forward annual Asian Wetlands Week (AWW) on 2-8 February
- Slogan: Wetlands Love Children



# Children and Wetland Exchange Programme among Japan, Korea and China, 18-19 January 2003, Yatsu-higata, Narashino, Japan

- The first trail of international wetlands exchange.
- Each 3 children from China, Korea and Japan have participated.
- Organizational partners: Wetlands International-China, Pusan university, Seoul University, Yatsu-minami Elementary School, Yatsu-higata Nature Observation Center



# Children and Wetlands Exchange Program was continued till 2011

- Arena was expanded to Japan, Korea, China, Thailand and Malaysia
- Total 12 exchange events were held and participated by more than 1100 children

Krabi, Thailand, 2009



Upo, Korea, 2004



Zhanjiang, China, 2008



# KODOMO Ramsar: Asian-African Children Exchange Program, 8-10 November 2005, Kampala, Uganda

- 7 children from Japan, Korea, Thailand and Malaysia were invited.
- Knowledge sharing by presentations
- Discussion on "How children can participate in wetland Conservation ?" with 200 Ugandan children
- Adoption of "Children's Appeal for COP9"



# Opening Ceremony of Ramsar COP9, 8 Nov. 2005, Kampala, Uganda



## Children's Appeal for COP9



- 16 young representatives read out the Children's Appeal for COP9 in front of more than 1000 audience at the Opening Ceremony of COP9
- It was the first occasion that the younger generation was officially invited to COP's official program and deliver their recommendation.



## KODOMO Ramsar Wetlands Exchange (2006-)

- Proposed project by children who participated the past international wetland exchange program.
- They liked to launch a series of exchange program around Ramsar sites in Japan in order to share their experiences, and construct network among children who were involved in various kinds of wetland conservation.



Kick-off meeting on 10 June 2006 at Yatsu-higata Ramsar Site, Narashino, Japan

# KODOMO Ramsar: Children's participation in effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention (2006-2008 )

- Total 9 events.
- Participated by 530 children from 38 Ramsar sites.
- Outputs: KODOMO messages



Tofutsu-ko, Hokkaido



Manko, Okinawa



Nakaumi and Shinji-ko, Tottori /Shimane

## KODOMO Ramsar: International Wetlands Exchange in Niigata, 20-24 August 2008, Niigata, Japan

- Participated by 69 children from 23 Ramsar sites of India, China, Korea, Thailand, Russia and Japan.
- Output: KODOMO Message for the Ramsar COP10:

***"Wetlands are there, Live is there,  
We connect them, They become treasures"***





KODOMO Message for Ramsar COP10

KODOMO Message T-shirts

## Children at the Ramsar COP10



Presentation of the Children's Messages at the Opening of the Ramsar COP10

# KODOMO Biodiversity: Participation of children in biodiversity conservation (2009-2010)

- Goal: CBD COP10, Nagoya, Aichi, October 2010
- Total 9 events
- Participated by 340 children from 24 Ramsar sites of Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan
- Outputs: 9 posters on the local treasures





Performance in front of the exhibit booth of “KODOMO Biodiversity” at CBD\_COP11, Nagoya, Japan , 2010



41 children from various Ramsar sites participated in the event as volunteers .

## KODOMO Ramsar for ESD (2011-2013)



In line with Japanese Government's National Plan of Action on DESD (UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development)  
Supported by Japan Fund for Global Environment



Kick-off Event of KODOMO Ramsar for ESD at the ECOLIFE FAIR 2011, an event for the World Environmental Day organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan , June 2011



# KODOMO Ramsar for ESD: International Wetlands Exchange



Wuxi, China



Hyderabad, India



Chiang Mai, Thailand

- Total 11 events (as of November 2013)
- Participate by 1170 children from 20 Ramsar sites of India, Thailand, China, Korea and Japan.
- Outputs: Posters of local treasures, and slogans

# Key contents of KODOMO Ramsar program

1. Presentations → Sharing mutual experiences on wetland conservation
2. Field visit → Learning about ecosystem and biodiversity of the specific wetland site  
Looking for and identification of treasures of the site
3. Group discussion → Selecting 6 treasures from their findings and prioritize them  
Drawing Illustration of the selected 6 treasures  
Drafting a slogan of each group
4. Plenary discussion → Sharing outputs of each groups  
Selecting top 6 treasures and drawings by discussion  
Accomplishment of Poster of Treasures of the site

**Teachers/staffs tend not to lead their discussion, only facilitate and encourage.**

## Poster of the Treasures of Kushiro-Shitsugen



- 6 treasures selected by children:
- Local people who conserve the wetland
  - Red-crowned cranes
  - Marshland
  - Rivers where cranes roost
  - Diverse plants
  - Sound of wild animals

Learning from the [fields](#)



Presentations and experience sharing



Group discussion



Plenary discussion and accomplishment of output

## Achievements 10 years' KODOMO program of RCJ

- Total 47 events / Participants: 3700 children
- Involvement of 46 Ramsar sites (India, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Korea, Russia, and Japan)
- Contributions to Ramsar COP9 and COP10, CBD\_COP10 and COP11 by sending children's voice

## Outcomes

- Establishment of eco-clubs on wetlands at various Ramsar sites  
Miyajima-numa, Nakaumi, Manko, Kutcharo-ko , Yatsu-higata and etc.
- Launch the exchange programs voluntarily  
Fujimae-higata, Nakaumi, Lower Maruyama River, Kabukuri-numa and etc.
- Launch wetland school network  
Wetland School Network in China  
KODOMO Ramsar Wetland School Network in Thailand (proposed)

## Individual-based fruits

- A boy who participated in the first KODOMO program in his elementary school days in 2003 is studying the ecology of tidal flats at university
- A girl who participated in the second KODOMO program in her elementary school days in 2004 is studying at a university course of international communication
- A former student volunteer is now engaged in consultancy work on environmental conservation projects in Cambodia and Jordan

## Proposed project for FY2014

- To organize "KODOMO Ramsar for ESD: International Wetlands Exchange" at a Ramsar site in Japan, inviting representatives of the Ramsar sites in Asia where have been involved in the past 10 years KODOMO programs.
- Outputs of the above should be contributed to the UNESCO 2014 World Conference in Okayama-Aichi, Japan, November 2014.
- To launch a KODOMO Ramsar training program aiming at capacity building and knowledge sharing of educators/facilitators who are engaged in environmental education at the wetland centers of Ramsar sites in Asian region.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

