

LOCAL AUTHORITIES INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF AGENDA 21 -JAPAN

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Summary

At the Earth Summit held in 1992, Agenda 21, the action plan for the implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, was adopted along with the Declaration itself. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 provides that “because so many of the problems and the solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local authorities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives” and stipulates that a Local Agenda 21, an action plan for the local level, should be formulated. Local Agenda 21 is a process where actors in each region including local authorities, citizens, private enterprises and groups of all kinds share a common view for the future and a concrete action plan for its realization is planned and implemented with the support of public participation.

Local Agenda 21 has already been formulated in many major local governments in Japan. However, because their adoption tends only to be a result of campaigning by the Japan Environment Agency, in many cases, Local Agenda 21 is not a comprehensive social plan but the Basic Environmental Plan, formulated under administrative guidance, given the title of Local Agenda 21. Consequently, local administrations have played a major role in the planning of a majority of Local Agenda 21. The following five cases exceed others in the sense that its actors were enthusiastic about the establishment of a system for public participation.

Toyonaka Agenda 21: In Toyonaka City, Osaka Prefecture, the “Toyonaka Civic Environmental Council” spent two years in its “action approach,” where the Local Agenda 21 formulation process not only involved planning the Agenda itself but also actually taking action in environmental conservation movements represented by the “Carry Your Own Shopping Bag Campaign” and the “Environmental Family Budget Campaign.”

Agenda 21 Katsuragawa and Sagami-gawa Rivers: Agenda 21 Katsuragawa and Sagami-gawa Rivers is the first Local Agenda 21 in Japan to be formulated for a river basin and is noted for the involvement of more than one local government. It is also unique in that citizens originally opposed to public undertakings took part in its planning.

Shiki City Environment Basic Plan: In Shiki City, “Eco-City Shiki,” a civic environmental organization played a major role in planning the “Shiki City Environmental Plan Designed by Citizens.” Shiki City Hall established the Shiki City Environmental Council, which formulated the Shiki City Basic Environmental Plan, upon which the contents of the prior environmental plan was reflected. The joint work among the administration and citizens in planning the Basic Environmental Plan enhanced within each individual the sense of responsibility and concern towards the environment.

21’ Iida Environmental Plan: Iida City, noted for its unique undertakings such as the “Environmental Watcher System,” formulated in 1996 the “21’ Iida Environmental Plan,” which is composed of core projects and more concrete regional measures. Such instruments as the “Environmental Watcher System” were incorporated and citizens investigated the status of the natural environment in the city. Outcomes of a survey on public awareness were adopted as indicators in the plan.

Hino City Basic Environmental Plan: Hino City has given two projects, namely, the “Hino City Basic Environmental Plan” and the “Hino City Environmental Consideration Guidelines” the title of Local Agenda 21. The Hino City Basic Environmental Plan was drafted from a very early stage by over one hundred citizens assembled through public advertisement. The citizens’ draft was adopted with little modification and thus the Local Agenda 21 is literally a plan hand-made by citizens. Experiences of cooperation between the public and the administration such as the citizens’ direct claim to the municipal government leading to the formulation of the city’s Basic Environmental Ordinance and the making of the “Citizens’ Version of the Master Plan for City Planning” served as an effective background for the strong initiative observed among citizens.

1. Introduction

Just as the popular slogan, “Think globally, act locally” implies, global environmental issues such as global warming are often caused by the various aspects of our activities and daily lives in the local community. Therefore, local governments, supposedly always in contact with their citizens, are expected to play an active role in finding answers to global environmental issues. This concept was adopted at the Earth Summit

held in 1992, in Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 and has taken root internationally.

Local Agenda 21 involves the planning and implementation processes for the action plan for sustainable development in the entire region. The process is initiated with the sharing of a common notion of a sustainable society among the region's actors, who are the local government, citizens, private enterprises and other groups. The local government plays an important role as the core around which the other actors assemble. In our world, we can observe many different forms of local governments, from those of recognized autonomy—where legislative, administrative and financial authority have been acknowledged—to those where the leader is appointed by the national government and all decisions are in the hands of the central government. Japanese local governments, with their history of being the arms of a centralized bureaucratic country, only have limited autonomy, regardless of the shift from appointed leadership to elected leadership after World War II. Therefore, many Japanese Local Agenda 21's have been adopted through the initiative of the local government under the guidance of the central government.

This report is based upon the Global Environmental Forum's "An Investigation of the Local Agenda 21 Planning Progress," commissioned by the Japan Environmental Agency in 1998. As Local Agenda 21 is planned under the initiative of the Environmental Agency, in Japan, a number of local governments have given their Environmental Basic Plan the status of Local Agenda 21. This report focuses on the cases where public participation in formal decision-making, an important issue for Japanese local governments, has been realized in unique ways. We hope that by making known to the world Japan's efforts in the Local Agenda 21 process, we can promote developments in Local Agenda 21 throughout the world.

2. Overview of Local Agenda 21

2.1. What Is Local Agenda 21?

Local Agenda 21, as defined by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the organization that formulated and launched its concept, is: a participatory multi-sectoral process to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of a long-term strategic action plan to deal with priority local sustainable development concern.

Agenda 21 was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, or Earth Summit,) held in Brazil in 1992. It is an action plan that aims to resolve the many problems concerning development that states worldwide are faced with.

The concept of "Local Agenda 21" was devised by ICLEI in 1991 as a framework for local administrations throughout the world to implement the agreements concluded at the Summit.

ICLEI's definition contains the designing and implementation processes as well as Local Agenda 21, the action plan itself. Local Agenda 21 can be rephrased as the

process in which each actor, including local administrations, citizens, businesses and organizations of every character, with a common idea of a local community, work together to adopt an action plan for its realization. The emphasis is more focused on how many actors were involved in the process or how each participant implements the action plan than whether Local Agenda 21 has been documented, or how much documentation has been completed.

In Japan, in 1995, “Guidebook for the Planning of Local Agenda 21” was issued by the Environment Agency. The booklet presented specific guidelines for the formulation of Local Agenda 21, calling for three basic prerequisites. Local Agenda 21 should:

1. Aim for the realization of a sustainable society
2. Be an action plan that identifies concrete undertakings to be taken
3. Be developed with public participation.

2.2 Local Agenda 21 Formulation In The World

The framework of Local Agenda 21 continued to enjoy international support after the Earth Summit. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)’s Third Session was held in April 1995, when “Local Government Day” was established and the experiences of local governments were incorporated into the discussion through the introduction of Local Agenda 21 projects in six cities. Furthermore, at CSD’s Fourth Session, held from April 18 through May 3, 1996, the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) and ICLEI reported their plans to jointly make a detailed assessment of the performance of Local Agenda 21 campaigns and won the Commission’s support.

ICLEI, in collaboration with DPCSD, implemented two complementary surveys which involved first surveying the progress of Local Agenda 21 for quantitative data and then evaluating the status of the implementation of Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 for qualitative data. The survey revealed that:

1. Over 1800 local administrations in 64 countries were involved in Local Agenda 21 activities as of November 30, 1996.
2. Municipalities in developed countries accounted for 90% of the identified Local Agenda 21 processes
3. The most popular Local Agenda 21 thematic focus was “addressing environmental, economic and social concerns equally.”
4. Among the actors involved in Local Agenda 21 Action Plans were the business sector, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, the educational sector, and scientific institutions (e.g. universities). (The order of listing corresponds to that of frequency.)

2.3. Local Agenda 21 in Japan

Helped by the Environment Agency’s promotion of its adoption in local administrations, local governments have taken the initiative in developing Local Agenda 21 Action Plans. Many, burdened with too many other activities on the agenda, have regarded their Basic

Environmental Plans as the equivalent of Local Agenda 21.

However, there are Basic Environmental Plans of which various sectors including civic organizations have participated in the development of Local Agenda 21.

According to a survey conducted by the Environment Agency on prefectural governments and cities designated by ordinance, 38 prefectures and 11 major cities have developed Local Agenda 21 and four prefectures and one city are in the process of its formulation as of June 30, 1998 (cf. Tables 1, 2).

Local Government	Date of Adoption	Local Government	Date of Adoption
<Prefectures>		<Prefectures cont.>	
Hokkaido	April 1996	Tottori Prefecture	February 1997
Aomori Prefecture	March 1997	Shimane Prefecture	March 1995
Miyagi Prefecture	March 1995	Okayama Prefecture	March 1994
Fukushima Prefecture	March 1996	Hiroshima Prefecture	August 1993
Ibaragi Prefecture	May 1994	Kagawa Prefecture	November 1996
	March 1993	Ehime Prefecture	May 1995
	May 1994		March 1996
Gunma Prefecture	March 1994	Kochi Prefecture	February 1997
	February 1997	Fukuoka Prefecture	March 1997
	March 1998	Saga Prefecture	March 1994
Saitama Prefecture	March 1997	Nagasaki Prefecture	March 1996
Chiba Prefecture	November 1993	Kumamoto Prefecture	December 1996
Tokyo Metropolitan	May 1992	Oita Prefecture	March 1994
Kanagawa Prefecture	January 1993	Miyazaki Prefecture	March 1997
Niigata Prefecture	March 1997	<Ordinance Designated Cities>	
Toyama Prefecture	March 1998	Sapporo City	November 1997
Ishikawa Prefecture	February 1997	Sendai City	September 1995
	March 1998	Chiba City	March 1995
Fukui Prefecture	March 1997	Yokohama City	September 1996
Yamanashi Prefecture	March 1994	Nagoya City	December 1996
Nagano Prefecture	February 1997	Kyoto City	October 1997
Gifu Prefecture	March 1996	Osaka City	May 1995
Shizuoka Prefecture	March 1996	Kobe City	March 1996
			July 1993
			July 1993
Aichi Prefecture	December 1994	Hiroshima City	March 1996
Mie Prefecture	July 1994		March 1996
Shiga Prefecture	April 1994		June 1992
Kyoto Prefecture	March 1997	Fukuoka City	December 1992
Osaka Prefecture	June 1996		March 1994
Hyogo Prefecture	November 1992		
Nara Prefecture	March 1996		

Source: Japan Environment Agency

Local governments with more than one date of adoption consider several projects to be Local Agenda 21.

Table 1: The status of Local Agenda 21 planning

Some examples of Local Agenda 21, that were developed under the initiative of citizens are “Shiki City Environmental Plan Designed by Citizens” of the City of Shiki (Saitama Prefecture) and “Citizens’ Version of the Master Plan for City Planning” of the City of Hino (Tokyo Metropolitan Area). In these two cities, citizens have played an important

role in the formulation of the above mentioned action plans, which have had a strong influence on the formal Basic Environmental Plans developed by the respective local governments.

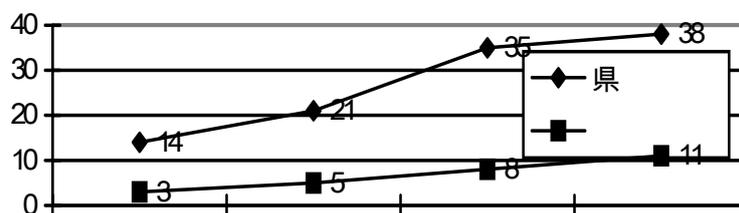


Table 2: Number of Local Governments that have Completed Local Agenda 21

There have also been projects that emerged from a strong sense of community in the basin. Local Agenda 21 in the Katsuragawa River and Sagami-gawa River Basin in Yamanashi and Kanagawa Prefectures was the first of its kind. Kochi Prefecture’s “Comprehensive Plan for Shimantogawa River’s Clear Streams,” which aimed for the creation of a network among prefectural governments, municipal governments and civic organizations in the Shimantogawa River Basin is another example of collaboration in the basin.

2.4. Public Participation

In Japan, many local administrations view the promotion of public participation as a significant issue. The following are some examples of efforts:

1. Hino City: In Hino City, Tokyo Metropolitan Area, citizens were entrusted with the drafting of Local Agenda 21 from the initial stage, and furthermore, with the management of the planning committee. A working team composed of 109 publicly gathered citizens formulated the outline of the Local Agenda 21. The advertisement for working team members was done through the city’s bulletin. Applicants were all welcomed and were divided into five subcommittees, which they operated. In addition, interested staff members formed a working group within the municipal government and gave the citizens support in their subcommittees. From October 1997 through August 1998, 118 subcommittee sessions were held, the number implying the great enthusiasm of the civic subcommittee members.

2. Shiki City: In Shiki City, Saitama Prefecture, the “Environmental Civic Council” composed of 24 publicly gathered voluntary citizens representing diverse backgrounds and two public enterprises developed the draft for the Shiki Basic Environmental Plan in cooperation with a committee inside the municipal government. Furthermore, a questionnaire was conducted on two hundred citizens, 200 businesses and 620 elementary school students to check the level of public awareness of the issues raised in the “Shiki City Environmental Plan Designed by Citizens,”

3. Toyonaka City: In Toyonaka City, Osaka Prefecture, 150 organizations were brought together in “Toyonaka Citizens’ Environmental Council,” where they adopted the

“action approach,” an approach in which the results achieved through environmental education and action would be reflected upon the Agenda. Young members of “Toyonaka Citizens’ Environmental Council” have also endeavored, as “Eco-Caravan Troops,” to visit community associations, schools and businesses to discuss environmental issues.

4. Iida City: Iida City, Nagano Prefecture, invited 110 elementary and junior high school students and citizens to become “Environmental Investigators,” who have cooperated with “Inatani Nature Society,” a local environmental organization, to investigate the status of the local natural environment. Their findings have been reflected in the municipality’s Local Agenda 21.

2.5. Institution of Measurable Targets

Many Local Agenda 21 approaches have involved instituting measurable targets, or indicators, to enhance effectiveness or as a criterion for its progress. Kyoto Prefecture, Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Saitama Prefecture utilize the amount of CO₂ emission as an index. Each region has adopted its own index; the level of participation (Toyonaka City) and that of public environmental action or awareness (Iida City) are two unique examples.

Toyonaka City has provided common environmental targets, or indexes, for the city’s Basic Environmental Plan and Toyonaka Agenda 21, namely: 1) number of people involved in partnerships; 2) emission of CO₂ per capita; 3) net waste disposal; 4) rain water permeation rate; 5) level of environmental standard achievement; 6) green coverage.

Shiki City’s Basic Environmental Plan raises 1) green area and park area per capita; 2) further diffusion of the sewerage system; 3) reduction of waste; 4) reduction of greenhouse effect gases; 5) achievement and maintenance of environmental standards.

In Saitama Prefecture, the “Hot Plan to Save the HOT Earth – Land of Colors Local Agenda 21” has set, as CO₂ reduction targets, 1) the leveling off of CO₂ emission levels per capita at 1990 levels beyond the year 2000; 2) reduction of CO₂ emission levels per capita by 20% from 1990 levels from the year 2005 through 2010.

2.6. Implementation System

Kyoto Prefecture founded, as a concrete measure to implement “Kyoto’s Agenda 21, the “Forum for Kyoto’s Agenda,” which is comprised of citizens, businesses, civic organizations, industrial organizations and administrative organizations. Members are divided into six working groups, among which are those for environmental family budgeting, green consumer fostering and ISO support.

Minamata City, Kumamoto Prefecture, will follow up on its Basic Environmental Plan through the conclusion and implementation of district environmental agreements.

In 1998, Setagaya Ward, Tokyo Metropolitan Area, developed the “Basic Environmental

Plan/Environmental Action Guidelines First Evaluation/Review Report”. Setagaya Ward is to review its guidelines based on data collected on the status of “continual improvement” in environmental actions within the ward. Participants of a forum founded at the planning stage of the guidelines took the initiative in establishing the “Setagaya Environmental Forum,” a loose network of local environmental organizations and are responsible for the monitoring of the actions of citizens and the business sector.

In Kanagawa Prefecture, the “Kanagawa Global Environmental Conservation Promotion Council” actively promotes follow-up work on its Local Agenda 21.

In March 1995, Kumamoto City developed the “Kumamoto City Global Warming Prevention Local Promotion Plan” which aims to reduce CO₂ emission by 20% from 1990 levels. It has, at present, implemented various global warming prevention measures, including the “Kumamoto City CO₂ Reduction Pledge” movement. In this program, the city’s intentions are to get as many citizens as possible involved in CO₂ reduction by having those citizens who have pledged to reduce emission by 20% from September 1998 levels register with the city, their choice from fifteen examples of concrete practices. Their options include “waste reduction,” “energy conservation” and “effective use of automobiles”. 9915 citizens of Kumamoto City have already made pledges as of March 30, 1999.

2.7. Impacts

Most local administrations surveyed have mentioned the enrichment of learning and experience through three-sectoral as a significant impact of Local Agenda 21 planning activities. Toyonaka City also refers to: 1) the increase of opportunities to act environmentally within the region, 2) sharing the region’s future ideals, 3) the mutually reinforcing effect that different ideas have upon one another, a phenomenon unseen in purely administrative activities. There are many examples of “citizens’ cases” where an immature idea presented by one participant was enriched by that of another participant.

The adoption of Local Agenda 21 is steadily seeing progress in Japan. There are other action plans without the Local Agenda 21 status, that should also gain recognition. The Town of Aya (Miyazaki Prefecture) has a town development program that values the town’s abundant evergreens as a significant feature of the town. In the Town of Asahi (Yamagata Prefecture), the “Eco-Museum Plan” and “Aso Green Stock Plan” are supported by public participation. These are also action plans, enthusiastically promoted by local administrations that link green tourism and regional development with sustainable development.

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