

# JESC NEWS

No.13  
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## Management of Disaster Waste Generated Accompanied with Tohoku-Region Pacific Coast Earthquake

The year of 2011 is the year hard to forget for all Japanese. Tremendous earthquake hit the Tohoku-region pacific coast on March 11<sup>th</sup>. The earthquake destroyed some parts of social infrastructures and buildings but huge tsunami occurred by the earthquake also brought further damages and killed many people. Consequently, nearly 16 thousand people were killed, some 3,500 people are still missing and more than 940 thousand houses and building were totally or partly damaged.

Though huge amount of disaster waste, which exceeded 20 million tons, was generated mostly by tsunami, rescuing those who suffered and missed naturally took precedence at first. The Self-Defense Force of Japan, SDF, including rescue teams from many countries cleared debris to find missing people and enable minimum transportation for emergency vehicles. Japan Environmental Sanitation Center, JESC, a sub-branch of Ministry of the Environment (MOE) quickly organized the Disaster Assistance Team and started necessary activities.

Some JESC engineers collected the information on the situations of waste disposal facilities in the area, visited the sites and checked states of the plants

accepting the requests from municipalities. Some were sent to the head office of MOE and closely worked with the ministry staff. In addition, many staff specializing in various environmental issues coped with emergency inquiries and showed possible and favorable solutions to the people who were in environmental difficulties.



Tsunami brought sea bottom sediment which may include hazardous organic matters and contaminated living environment



Japanese houses and buildings are originally strong enough against earthquake but tsunami flew almost everything away

Disaster waste management work started in earnest some two months after the earthquake. Some JESC staff, as waste management experts, patrolled the suffered cities and towns to give timely advices together with MOE staff and staff of the National Institute for Environmental Studies and continue to work with municipality staff to proceed necessary tasks such as developing better waste management plan. Disaster waste which would affect to living environment was cleared by the end of August and the subsequent step for processing waste collected into temporary storage yard is now steadily moving forward according to the national guideline.



Meeting with municipality staff in patrol activity done by staff of MOE, NIES and JESC



Appropriate separation of disaster waste is important to realize smooth clearing work

The accident in the Fukushima No.2 nuclear power station, however, made the management complicated. Wastes were contaminated with radioactive particles. Also, living environment in surrounding area was contaminated with those particles, and it is considered that the work for clearing contaminated items and wastes will generate additional wastes. New law was enacted to solve the problem that we have not experienced before and necessary practice code to wisely implement the law is now under examination.

We, staff of the JESC, deeply appreciate for every heart-warming concern that you gave us. We received so many e-mails and gentle comments which encouraged us from the friends who spent good times in international cooperation events such as conferences and JICA training etc. Overcoming sad incident, we are pleased that we could have many guests from various countries this year and soon are able to hold international conferences such as "3R Conference for Asian Local Governments". We, All the JESC staff, look forward to seeing you again and exchange significant information, thus we will continue to endeavor to achieve this.

(Shoichi HAYAMI)

## “the 4<sup>th</sup> 3R Conference for Asian Local Governments” organized by JESC will be held in January, 2012

“The 1st 3R Conference for Asian Local Governments” organized by Japan Environmental Sanitation Center, JESC, held on Oct. 28th 2008 in Saitama city, and the 2nd conference was held on Oct. 25th 2009 in Fukuoka City.

The 3rd conference was held on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Kobe city with the theme of “Waste Separation and Recycling”. The conference invited 4 Japanese local governments including Hyogo, Fukuoka, Miyagi prefectures and Kobe city, along with 10 Asian cities including Phnom Penh/Cambodia, Shenyang/China, Padan and Surabaya/Indonesia, Ulsan/South Korea, Vientiane/Laos, Seberang Perai/Malaysia, Calbayog/ Philippines, and Phitsanulok/ Thailand, Hanoi/Vietnam.

The keynote speech was given by each participant with Hyogo prefecture as directing chairperson. After the speech, discussion session was successfully wrapped up by Masaru TANAKA, the coordinator. He is a professor of Tottori University of Environmental Studies. The major discussion points were “Roles of each stakeholder such as local government, enterprises and citizens” and “How to promote waste separation and recycling”.

The opinions throughout the conference was summarized as “KOBE DECLARATION” and adopted by all participants.

### <KOBE DECLARATION> (for short)

Today's participants have fully recognized, through reports from various local government and the discussion about them, that the separation and recycling of solid waste contribute to the conservation of natural resources and the living

environment as well as to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, we have come to a common view that to further increase these effects, we need to make separation and recycling more active and to involve the surrounding municipal governments in it.

(full text:

[http://www.jesc.or.jp/environmentS/3r\\_confERENCE/img/kobe\\_en.pdf](http://www.jesc.or.jp/environmentS/3r_confERENCE/img/kobe_en.pdf))

The 4<sup>th</sup> conference will be held in January 2012 in Tokyo. We, JESC, are looking forward to your participation for the conference.

DATE: January 30 - 31, 2012

VENUE: Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo (2-2-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-Ku, Tokyo)

THEME:

1<sup>st</sup> Session: 3R and Cooperation among Local Governments

2<sup>nd</sup> Session: Technology Transfer

3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Disaster Waste Management

ORGANIZER: Japan Environmental Sanitation Center

CO-ORGANIZER:

Ministry of the Environment, Japan/Tokyo Metropolitan Government



(Yoshiko MATSUMURA)

## Editor's Comment

### Dragons live in each single one of us

This newsletter shows you JESC's activities concerning disaster waste treatment in Japan. Now we just have begun taking a first step to clean up environment polluted by radioactive substances. We won't be beaten. Please imagine a clean, beautiful Japan. We will be able to clean Japan up and make her more beautiful than ever. We are quite confident to accomplish this task in three years.

By the way I want to give you all an impressive speech.

In order to encourage Japanese elementary school students who were struck by the tsunami, the King of Bhutan Wantichu told them and I quote:

"Do you know that dragons exist?

I've seen the dragon.

These dragons live in each single one of us.

Dragons eat their own experiences.

And become stronger and stronger over the years.

And you must be the center of these dragons."

I think he wanted to tell us the following:

Never look backward,

Let's keep on moving forward together.

Additionally I will give you my favorite Japanese words.

Japanese "Arigatou" means thank you as you know.

"Mottainai" means no waste, it's still valuable.

Now this word became international one.

And Japanese "Kizuna" means ties.

We never walk alone.

We are thinking of you.

I will give you Kizuna.

I wish our Kizuna will create the future.

I expect your mail expressing your dragons.

See you.

(Hideaki FUJIYOSHI)



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