

Kitakyushu Declaration

January 23rd, 2020

The 12th 3R Conference for Asian Local Governments was held in the City of Kitakyushu on January 23rd, 2020. The presenters consisted of three local governments and one national government from overseas countries, and one international organization, three Japanese local governments, and four Japanese private enterprises. The conference was successful, with active discussion held under the theme, “Local Governments’ Actions against Plastic Waste Issues and their Challenges.”

Single-use plastic waste such as plastic bottles and bags is a serious problem on a global scale. It is estimated that approximately 8 million tons of plastic waste are discharged into the ocean every year. It has been forecasted that if we continue dumping plastic into the sea at the present rate, measured by weight, there will be more plastic than fish by 2050. Moreover, challenges for zero discharge of new plastic waste into the ocean by 2050 were included in the Leaders’ Declaration at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019. Plastic waste management is recognized as an urgent issue which should be tackled seriously and globally.

In these circumstances, central governments in each country are required to formulate plastic waste reduction policies at the national level. Local governments are required to build partnerships with the private sector for reducing plastic waste and to support community-based solutions. Besides, private enterprises are required to develop processes for utilizing recycled materials in their products and technologies to reduce microplastics discharged in the wear and damage of them. Moreover, it is recommended to use bioplastics for products and packaging.

The participants at this conference proposed the following:

- (1) We request central governments to formulate a comprehensive strategy as a countermeasure for plastic resource recycling.
- (2) Local governments are required to take tangible, community-based, and region-specific countermeasures against plastic waste.
- (3) Services and retailers are expected to refrain from using single-use plastics. Citizens are expected to avoid purchasing and using single-use plastics.
- (4) Local governments should conduct campaigns for motivating citizens not to use single-use plastics. Raising the awareness of consumers is also important. It is required to take collaborative activities for both public and private sectors.
- (5) Local governments should improve their plastic waste collection systems and establish proper treatment, recycling, and disposal systems for preventing plastic waste from entering rivers and bays. For implementing such activities, it is expected that the local governments in the same river basins cooperate with each other. Citizens also need to cooperate with the collection systems to prevent scattering of waste and to promote recycling.
- (6) For establishing proper treatment, recycling, and disposal systems, advanced technologies, and systems should be transferred by utilizing city-to-city cooperation.

The participants recognized that the discussion about “Local Governments’ Actions against Plastic Waste Issues and their Challenges” was very fruitful to understand mutually and share future issues. We reached an agreement that sorting and recycling plastic waste were fundamental, and local governments should be encouraged to implement necessary actions each other. Based on the result of this conference, local governments participating at the conference are expected to further develop this conference by picking up the important issues of the 3Rs in the Asian region and promoting information sharing.