

## Statement of the Third Asia 3R Citizens' Forum Japan Conference

Organized by Asia 3R Citizens' Network

Tokyo, September 3, 2011

### PREAMBLE

A catastrophic disaster struck Japan and left over 20,000 people dead or missing when the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, followed by an accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. . This disaster also created unprecedented problems, with 23 million tons of waste, just counting the rubble created by the earthquake and tsunami, equivalent to half the amount of waste disposed nationwide each year, exacerbated by the need to dispose of radiation-contaminated waste and sludge. The people of Japan deeply appreciate the outpouring of material and moral support from Asia and other countries around the world. We know that must face the challenge of recovery from this disaster, in cooperation with many actors.

Almost half a year after the March 11 disaster, seventeen Japanese citizens' organizations gathered on September 3 for the "Asia 3R Citizens' Forum Japan Conference" (3R meaning "reduce, reuse and recycle"). We were grateful for a message of encouragement from the Singapore Environment Council and for participants who joined from China.

### CONFERENCE REPORT

- We, the representatives of citizens' organizations gathered for the "Asia 3R Citizens' Forum Japan Conference," aim for a "zero waste" Asia. At the conference we reconfirmed our commitment work toward creating a sustainable society based on the 3Rs through cooperation to strengthen grassroots networks in Asia to promote the 3Rs approach in practice, while also collaborating with governments and businesses.
- As a result of rapid economic growth in Asia in recent years, lifestyles are becoming more wasteful, based on mass production, mass consumption and mass disposal. The result has been creation of an enormous amount of waste, the spread of environmental pollution, and climate change, among other problems. Citizens in every country are facing common concerns about proper waste management and landfill sites that are quickly filling up.  
At the conference, we reconfirmed our view that to address these problems, policies need to give a high priority to the 3Rs and be based on extended producer responsibility, and that citizens, businesses and governments must all do their part in putting policy into practice.  
We also reconfirmed our view of the importance of not only practical efforts by citizens but also the importance of monitoring international resource flows.
- At this conference, we shared information about specific exemplary initiatives like efforts in the town of Kamikatsu in Tokushima Prefecture, Japan, which has made a "zero waste declaration." We also discussed achievements of collaboration and cooperation with diverse stakeholders, and successes achieved by NGOS from their activities.

- Kamikatsu, with a population of 2,000, aims to have zero incineration and zero landfill waste in 2020. Through the ingenuity of the townspeople, the 3Rs are being put into practice in daily life throughout the town.
- To promote environmentally-conscious design and use fewer containers and less packaging as well, businesses and citizens are collaborating to revive the cultural sense of what we call “mottainai,”\* recalling the now often-forgotten feeling of appreciation and respect for “monozukuri” (the creation or manufacturing of things). In order to create informed consumers who choose products with low environmental impacts, consumer organizations and other non-governmental organizations are organizing study tours to manufacturing and recycling facilities. They are also learning about product lifecycles and through business-government-NGO collaboration, are working to educate more people who can translate the ideas of the 3Rs into practice. Meanwhile, the provision of correct environmental information about products is an important role of governments and businesses. (\* Mottainai: A refers to sense of regret about waste when the intrinsic value of an object or resource is not properly utilized.)
- Citizens at home are also promoting composting of organic waste, the local circulation of resources, and actions aimed at local self-sufficiency by securing food and plant-based energy. Aiming for the exchange of experience and knowledge about composting, they are also promoting collaboration among NGOs, as well as between citizens, businesses and government.
- Many textile products end up being incinerated as combustible waste, but progress is also being made to reduce the amount of combustible waste, through R&D by researchers, as well as through business-government-NGO collaboration, for example, by collecting used textiles from households and selling them in recycling shops, using them as rags in factories, and to create energy after producing bioethanol.
- They are not only building networks with Japanese NGOs, but many NGOs also aim to build the foundations for international peace. They are aware of the importance of strengthening collaboration with colleagues in Asia to prevent environmental pollution from waste in the Asian region, and to work on addressing challenges.

## CLOSING

- We are encouraged to see the Regional 3Rs Forum in Asia being organized by governments and international organizations in Singapore in October 2011 as a step toward the realization of a 3Rs society in Asia.
- It is our hope that countries in the region will actively make use of the grassroots knowledge and experience of the Asia 3R Citizens’ Forum 2011 in order to move toward realization of a “zero waste” Asia.
- We hope that the discussions of this Asia 3R Citizens’ Forum 2011 will also be reflected at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to be held in June 2012.