

Joint Japan/Korea Declaration on Promoting Life-giving Agriculture and Wetland Restoration

Announcement of the Creation of a Japan/Korea Local Government Network for
implementing Ramsar Resolution X.31, Enhancing Biodiversity in Rice Paddies
as Wetland Systems

Changnyon-gun Bugok, Gyeongsangnam-do

27 April – 1 May 2012

Agriculture is a human activity that is rooted in nature and essential for humankind to survive and thrive. However, recent methods employing artificial pesticides and fertilizers that take no heed of impacts on biological diversity have degraded farmlands and undermined their ecosystems' balance.

Since the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the Ramsar Convention in Kampala, Uganda in 2005, Japanese and Korean citizens' groups have been working to promote recognition of the importance of rice paddy habitats as wetlands, and contributed to the adoption by COP10 in Changwon, Korea of Resolution X.31 "Enhancing biodiversity in rice paddies as wetland systems," which was jointly sponsored by the Governments of Japan and Korea. A draft resolution for consideration by COP11 to be held in Bucharest, Romania in July, 2012, addresses protection of rice paddies as wetland habitats and appropriate regulation of agricultural chemicals (COP11 DR 15 "Agriculture-wetland interactions: rice paddies and pesticide usage"). In cooperation with the Ramsar Regional Center in East Asia (in Changwon), experts from both the government and private sectors are working to consolidate their opinions on this resolution on the basis of mutual understanding and respect for various points of view.

Representatives of the municipal governments of Sado City, Toyooka City and Ohsaki City in Japan, and Kosson-gun, Changnyon-gun and Changwon City in Gyeongsangnam-do province of Korea and private sector experts on matters pertaining to rice paddies gathered at Changnyon-gun Bugok in Gyeongsangnam-do from 27 April to 1 May 2012 to review the progress of efforts to enhance the biological diversity of life-giving rice paddies. Exchanges of opinion among experts, local government officials and

others at this meeting resulted in agreement on the following four points.

1. Areas with leading experience in promoting life-giving agriculture in Kosson-gun, Changnyon-gun and Changwon City in Gyeongsangnam-do province of Korea and Sado City, Toyo-oka City and Ohsaki City in Japan will work together with the Gyeongsangnam-do Ramsar Environment Foundation over the next 5 years to establish a “Network for Promoting Life-giving Agriculture and Restoring Wetland Ecosystems” with the above-mentioned Foundation serving as the secretariat. The network will adopt policy and undertake practical measures.

2. The private-sector experts and local governments that participated in this symposium will designate persons in charge of network matters, and as representatives of the network in both countries, will carry out the following:

(1) With the agreement of the relevant local government, actively communicate with citizens and others in non-governmental sectors to promote biological diversity protection and regional economic revitalization.

(2) On a regular basis, pursue exchanges on practical matters as well as information exchanges between the two countries.

(3) Consider a wide range of measures, including research activity, that will serve the goal of promoting life-giving agriculture and protection/restoration of wetland ecosystems.

3. The local governments of both countries that have attended this symposium and have leading experience in the field will seek to create networks with other local governments as well as with their national governments and the private sector with the purpose of protecting the biological diversity of rice paddies in northeast Asia. To this end they will make unremitting efforts to communicate, educate and raise public awareness about life-giving agriculture and wetland protection.

4. The Kyonsannamu-do Ramsar Environment Foundation will regularly sum up the activities of this network, draw up an international report subject to the approval of the network and distribute this report to relevant organizations.