

COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AT THE PORT OF OSAKA

Introduction

As Japan entered the modern age, Osaka grew as a commercial and industrial city. After the Second World War, heavy industries grew and prospered in our city.

Unfortunately, Osaka's commercial and industrial successes also created some serious problems.

Development created an increasing need for water. The land began to subside as water was pumped out.

Air pollution became a very serious problem.

To combat these environmental problems, the City of Osaka actively promoted pollution prevention measures and the development of technologies that would help preserve the environment. The city also asked for the cooperation of the private sector.

This is a wonderful example of the success that can be achieved when the government and the private sector work together.

In the 1970s, automobile ownership in Japan increased dramatically. The increase in the number of automobiles caused serious pollution in Osaka and other major cities.

The City of Osaka and other major Japanese cities requested that the national government enact strong anti-pollution measures. We were able to convince the national government to enact very tough laws that limited harmful emissions from automobiles.

In the 1980s, we began to consider what we could do to combat larger problems such as global warming. We began to pay closer attention to the impact that the growth and expansion of our city would have on future generations. We adopted a philosophy called "sustainable development."

What do I mean by this phrase, "sustainable development?"

In Osaka, we define "sustainable development" as development that creates new opportunities for our citizens while preserving our environment and avoiding the creation of future environmental problems. It also means development which improves the quality of life of human beings.

Our philosophy of "sustainable development" assumes that we can have no real and lasting economic progress if we ignore the environment. We also believe that protecting and preserving our environment will help us achieve greater economic success.

We also believe that government and business and the general public all benefit from a strategy that recognizes the existence of a symbiotic relationship between development and environmental protection. Let me give you an example.

Measures for Environmental Improvements in the Past

In the beginning of the 1970s, we noticed in Osaka, and in other harbors in Japan, that water quality was seriously declining. The chief cause of the problem was organic sludge. This sludge was composed of many harmful elements, including sulfides.

To address this problem, we did many things. The Port and Harbor Law and the Public Water Area Reclamation law were revised. Various environmental and anti-pollution measures were adopted in the port development plans, and the national government decided to subsidize these measures by the local governments.

The Port of Osaka is Japan's typical international trade port. Before, most of the waterfront had been used as piers and port-related land, where citizens could not easily visit. In order to provide places where citizens can enjoy nature and play with water and to promote environment preservation, we have constructed a Swimming Resort, a Fishing Park, a Natural Bird Sanctuary in the Sakishima Area and a yacht harbor in the Hokko Area.

Waste Disposal Sites Considering Environment and Land Utilization

We have proceeded with the development of waste disposal sites in the urban area while promoting the utilization of reclaimed land, giving due consideration to the environmental aspects. Let me explain these efforts in greater detail.

Like any other highly developed area, Osaka produces many different kinds of wastes. These include surplus soil from construction sites and ash from incinerated wastes. We make every effort to reduce wastes through recycling. However, waste disposal remains a very serious problem for our City.

Osaka is a very densely populated urban area. There is little land available in the city for waste disposal.

Therefore, we decided to use the waste from the City for reclamation of Maishima and Yumeshima in our port area, after the waste was properly treated. Strict environmental standards are enforced.

The Maishima and Yumeshima sites also play a critical role in Osaka's efforts to expand the City area by reclaiming land from the sea. The land we reclaim in this manner will insure that Osaka and the surrounding regions can continue expansion and development well into the 21st Century. The developments at Maishima and Yumeshima are the main part of Technoport Osaka Project.

Future City Modeled on Environmental Symbiosis in Yumeshima

The City of Osaka hopes to make Sakishima, Maishima, and Yumeshima thriving communities. We are planning the construction of sports, cultural, and recreational facilities, and convention centers. These areas will have advanced transportation networks and facilities for international trade. These areas will also be sites for information and technology businesses.

In these communities, we hope to introduce new technology for conserving resources and minimizing environmental pollution. We are studying the use of solar power and wind force, regional air conditioning, and cogeneration technologies.

Water recycling is another high priority. At the sewerage treatment plant in Yumeshima, we are focusing on the use of high-tech treated water.

The City of Osaka will develop these areas in a way that allows our citizens to enjoy the natural beauty of our shoreline. These efforts are all part of our Eco-Port Project.

At Maishima, we are preparing an artificial beach where children will be able to put their feet in seawater, touch the fish, and listen to the sound of the sea.

There will also be green belt areas where people can enjoy the sea breeze and a magnificent view of our ocean.

In addition, current vertical type revetments can be converted into nature friendly and gentle gradient beaches. Altering our shore in this manner provides for better aeration of the water. For example, the artificial beach we construct at Maishima will help to purify seawater.

Our planning at Osaka recognizes that there is a symbiotic relationship between our efforts to dispose of waste and to provide our citizens with areas where they can enjoy nature.

Collaboration of Public and Private Sectors Considering Environmental Issues

All the projects I have described to you today cannot be achieved by the City of Osaka alone. For our plans to succeed, we need the cooperation of the private sector.

For example, in Sakishima, 20 private companies are working with us to build a new city based on the philosophy of the Techno-Port Osaka Project.

Private companies are studying the introduction of regional air conditioning. We have established a heat supply firm for local residents. In many cases, local governments are investing in these projects.

There were once many small and medium scale factories in the City of Osaka. To minimize pollution from these enterprises, the City created an 18.6 hectares industrial park in the Sakishima area. Two hundred and fifty business have relocated there. This program was a great success for all involved. It allowed these enterprises to

modernize and concentrate their operations. The citizens of Osaka were spared the adverse environmental effects they would have suffered had these business remained at their old location. This shows how both the public and the private sectors can benefit when they work together.

The private sector is also cooperating with the government in technical matters concerning waste removal and land reclamation.

Together with cement manufacturers and construction companies, we are developing technologies that will allow us to mix ash from our incinerators with cement. This mixture will be used as a soil conditioner and for roadbeds.

In my brief time here, I have tried to outline for you some of the projects we have completed in Osaka and some of our plans for the future. I sincerely hope that you will come to Osaka to see firsthand what we are doing.

Conclusion

In December, 1999, the City of Osaka received the certification of the International Environmental Standard, ISO 14001, for the main building of the Municipal Government. This fact will not only reduce the load of the City's services on the environment, but also motivate and introduce citizens and corporations to take actions to preserve the environment.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that Osaka has formally filed with the International Olympic Committee a proposal to host the 2008 Olympics. Under our proposal, the Olympic Main Stadium and Athletes' Village are planned to be built in Maishima and Yumeshima, which we have reclaimed under the programs that I have described to you today.

By hosting the Olympics on this land, we hope to show other countries that it is possible to have development without destroying the environment. I invite all of you to come to Osaka to see what we have done. I thank you all for allowing me to spend some time with you today.