

Preface

It is clear that the Asia region faces serious environmental problems owing to its high population density and rapid economic growth over the last several decades. Many of these pressing issues have complicated causes and consequences, and their resolution requires integrated approaches. Problems extend across national borders necessitating cooperation between a number of different institutions, within and beyond each country. As the leading environmental research institutions of Japan, Korea and China, NIES, NIER and CRAES have been expected to play major roles in making scientific contributions to solving and/or mitigating environmental hazards. Through our cooperation in the Tripartite Presidents Meeting (TPM), organized annually since its establishment in 2004, our three institutions have enriched our understanding of the current situation regarding the environmental challenges facing our three countries and have developed our collaborative research activities.



One of the main achievements of the TPM since its formation has been to select six priority research areas for collaboration between our institutions. These are (1) freshwater pollution, (2) air pollution, including vehicular sources, (3) transboundary air pollution, (4) yellow sand storm (dust and sand storms), (5) hazardous materials contamination such as EDs and POPs, and (6) migratory birds and wetland. At the TPM5, following a review of our respective activities over the last five years, we reached agreement on the following three points. Firstly, we re-confirmed that all the six priority areas continue to be of great significance for our research collaboration. Secondly, we agreed that although our collaborative efforts in the four areas (Nos. 1 to 4) to date have provided successful results, further cooperative studies, particularly in the area of “freshwater pollution” (No. 1), are required and should be planned as a high-priority. Thirdly, we added solid waste management, including risk management and 3Rs, and climate change to the list of priority research areas.

Furthermore, three points with regard to the proceedings of the TPM5 are worthy of note. Firstly, the associated International Workshop on Environmental Contamination by Hazardous Substances was conducted successfully, furthering collaboration in our fifth priority research area. Secondly, researchers from the Hokkaido Institute of Environmental Sciences (HIES) joined the TPM5 and made presentations at the above-mentioned workshop. Their excellent contributions confirmed the significance of cooperation between national and local institutions. Thirdly, the associated field trip to east Hokkaido, including the visit to the NIES observatory at Cape Ochi-ishi, proved to be a good opportunity for exchanging our ideas on environmental monitoring studies, especially their management.

Finally, on behalf of NIES, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President KO Yunhwa, President MENG Wei, and all their colleagues from NIER and CRAES for their active participation and valuable contribution to the TPM5.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Ryutaro Ohtsuka'.

Ryutaro Ohtsuka
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