

## COAST MANAGEMENT AND NGO

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(Hereinafter referred to as Seto-Kan-Ren)

1. Major developments, including that of the heavy machinery and chemical industries are proceeding at alarming rates all along the Seto Inland Sea giving rise to the problem of environmental recycling. There are myriad examples of companies moving into reclaimed lands but leaving them unused. The many sufferers of air pollution near these coastal industries and of exhaust gases from that road traffic have won many law suits against the offending companies and the national government of Japan. However, these victims have come to realize that while they may have won monetary compensation from such legal action, they are powerless to restore their environment and enjoy the benefits that only a clean environment can provide. With that as a backdrop, the sufferers of such pollution have begun promoting with the government and private industries issues relating to the restoration of the natural environment by creating foundations and organizations, beginning with the Polluted Areas Restoration Center based in Nishi-Yodogawa, Osaka (known as the Aozora Foundation) which was founded in 1996. Also notable achievements are the Amagasaki Pollution Victims and Families Movement which is located on the west side of the Nishi-Yodogawa river, and the Mizushima Foundation which is based in Okayama Prefecture.
2. The preservation of the natural seashore and the prohibiting of sand extraction from the Seto Inland Sea coast have become major issues for the NGO. Although the prohibiting of sand extraction has contributed notably to improvements, there is still no complete ban on the removal of that important natural boundary. Furthermore, land is being reclaimed, thanks to the enforcement of a Setouchi Law. This law concerns measures to conserve the environment of the Seto Inland Sea. Every year, the association known as Seto-Kan-Ren negotiates with the Environment Agency (presently known as the Ministry of the Environment) regarding the closing of natural ocean area. Nevertheless, our meetings tend to only end by our proposing the problems faced by the citizens of that region. When, in 1997, the Ministry of the Environment proposed the idea so-called environmental creation researchers, the Seto-Kan-Ren rebutted with a few examples wherein such artificial seashores met with negative impact on the environment.
3. The NGO, public administrators, and scholars participated in the 1st EMECS, making it possible for these three autonomous parties to engage in meaningful discussions. At the NGO forum for EMECS 2001 which was held in Kobe, internal and external EGO who are concerned with the Enclosed Coastal Seas were gathered to exchange views. We can expect even more fruitful talks in the future, as a result. At that forum, the NGO proposed international EMECS Center was offered to take the role of linking NGOs, public administrations and researchers for cooperation relating to the closing of water areas. Subsequently, at the International EMECS meetings in 2003 sessions and exchanges were held in Setonaikai, Tokyo Bay, and in Isewan. The exchanges between the NGOs, public administrators and scholars proved to be none like any other in the past. Such an exchange is now scheduled to be held for three consecutive years. Personnel who

have responsibility in the administration and retired administrators will be in attendance. Such events strengthen our mutual confidence and provide the NGO and scholars with a place to make positive inroads to public administrators for them to better respond to our proposals and for them to voice their opinions frankly to the NGO people.

4. Traditionally, there has been little NGO participation in the management of the environmental, which is basically the realm of the public administrator. However, it has come to be widely recognized that their participation is essential to the balance. In the future, Japan cannot practically expect "rapid economic growth." Furthermore, with the current trend for negative population growth, it is clear that the preservation of our environment and its restoration are serious issues for Japan's future. It seems an essential component for NGOs to remain in constant opposition to public administrators and to industry, and such a stance will undoubtedly continue well into the future. However, what is in need is the cooperation and collaboration between public administrators and industry to preserve our environment and to attain its restoration. Now is the time for public administrators to make every effort to join forces with groups such as the NGO for positive impact on the environment.