

**START OF A NEW COASTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AIMING AT BEAUTIFUL,
SAFE AND LIVELY COASTS FOR THE NEXT GENERATIONS**

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In Japan, behind the seacoast are located a number of densely populated areas with a heavy concentration of valuable property. The seacoast itself, on the other hand, is a land-sea interface, as it keeps a diversity of life related to one another's existence. Whereas there is a variety of demands for free access to the open space, the ecosystem on the coast is very vulnerable to contamination caused by human activities.

The modern coastal management system of Japan started with the promulgation of the Seacoast Law in 1956 and has been playing an important role in protecting a great number of people and precious property in the hinterland from storm surges and high waves caused by typhoons, tsunamis by earthquakes, and other kinds of natural disasters.

In addition, continuous coastal erosion at various places and increasing public concern about coastal environment and public access to the coast have been followed by technical improvement in coastal management.

In the meantime, however, the coastal management became to face various kinds of new problems such as coastal pollution with oil spilled from tankers and environmental damage to the coastal habitats caused by automobiles running around the beaches, while a growing public concerns about environmental problems as well as the quality of life. It also became necessary to improve coastal management system in respect of public involvement and clear demarcation of responsibilities of central and local governments.

In order to effectively deal with these situations, the Seacoast Law was revised in 1999. Under the new law whose fundamental idea is "beautiful, safe and lively coasts" as common property of the nation for the coming generations, we have been promoting comprehensive coastal management to achieve a good balance among coastal protection from natural disasters, conservation of the coastal environment and public use of coastal space.

We also have a project to generate open spaces good for field works and ecological education, recreational spaces to enjoy marine sports and coastal wildlife, and social spaces for all generations on the seacoast, aiming at establishment of coastal management unique to each area.