

Message from President of JSCE, Dr. Ishii

The Activities of Japan Society of Civil Engineers

When I took the office as the 95th president of JSCE, I set three objectives to pursue during my one-year tenure: to make more contribution to further development and welfare of nearby Asian countries, to implement an infrastructure assessment program, and to set up a plan to celebrate the JSCE 100th anniversary to be held in seven years. Since then, I have been pursuing these objectives with my JSCE colleagues and feel getting on the right track. Besides working for these objectives, I have also put my efforts to promote “Speaking out” to improve communication with society.

(1) Contribution to further development and welfare of Asia

Civil engineer’s responsibility is to construct infrastructure such that the three conditions- Safety, Convenience and Good Environment are ensured in people’s daily life. Our country, building good skills and technologies to deal with its severe environmental conditions and overcoming the limited knowledge and financial resource, accomplished modernization in the late 19th century and the high economic growth started in the 1950’s. The country owed these achievements to our senior civil engineers’ dynamic leadership and significant efforts.

Meanwhile, there are many people in Asia who have not received benefits from modernization and economic growth in society yet. Rather, we have even recalled with a bitter feeling that the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami afflicted the people living in the countries surrounding the ocean and many of them have been suffered from the aftermath of the disaster still. Seeing the impact on the people and their lives, we have come to notice that what we have learned from our successful and unsuccessful experiences in the past could be shared with the people in the Asian region to give ideas to improve their knowledge and skills towards further development of society, and we earnestly hope that. Besides sharing the experience, we are taking other approaches to contribute to that region: reinforcing JSCE investigation team’s assistance and support to disaster afflicted areas and countries, establishing International Sections, promoting the JSCE CPD system to get referred to more widely in the civil engineering industry, and devising unified technical standards taking into account the social and physical features of the region. These steady efforts of ours are yielding fruit as time goes on.

(2) Infrastructure Assessment and Report Card

The existing infrastructures that were built in the high economic growth period have come to or over 50 years old one after another. In August 2007, a 40-year-old bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota collapsed. This incident was very shocking to us. We can’t leave it just another country’s problem, but should take it as a warning about the future of the aging infrastructures in our country. In order to keep the aging infrastructures maintained as well as to make the

people realize the importance of having healthy infrastructures for their safety, convenience and environment, we will conduct infrastructure assessments and release the results to the public

(3) Celebration on the JSCE 100th Anniversary

JSCE, which was established in 1914, will mark its 100th anniversary in seven years. Toward the memorable anniversary, we would like to take this opportunity as a turning point in the history of the Society and to look back what civil engineers have achieved so far and what they should do in the future. During the course of that, we will focus on reviewing the Society's mission and aims, polishing them to be more responsive to our present society's needs, stating the importance of infrastructures in society with the civil engineers' remarkable achievements in the past 100 years. And we will examine what we can do, should do as the leaders of civil engineering in the 21st century.

(4) Silence is Not Golden

As we may remember the bridge collapse in Minneapolis vividly, we would not like to leave the aging infrastructures as they are. If we do so, it is no doubt that our society will follow the example of America- "Japan in Ruins." On the other hand, the public and politicians hold a misunderstanding about infrastructure: they assume that the infrastructures once constructed will stand there for good without diminishing their performance. In order to correct the misunderstanding, we have determined to "speak out" in society. Silence is not golden any longer. Since the beginning of the year, we have held a meeting with mass media once a month, and also have started up the Editorial Committee to publicize the opinions exchanged in the meeting. Last, as mentioned earlier, we will conduct infrastructure assessments and publish the results in the form of report card.

Thank you very much.

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