

TRIP TO MYANMAR AND SUMMARY OF FY 2018

International Affairs Department

In Japan, 78.7% of its population enjoys the sewerage service as of March 2018. Then, how are Southeast Asian countries? Southeast nations, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam, still have low sewage service adoption rates.

United Nations General Assembly set 17 goals with 169 targets as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2016–2030. The 169 targets include "halving the proportion of untreated wastewater." But, many countries with insufficient know-how have difficulties improving their sewerage system.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Tourism (MLIT) and the Ministry of Environment (MOE) of Japan established the "Asia Wastewater Management Partnership (AWaP)" in July 2018. AWaP aims to contribute to achieving SDGs, develop the system required to improve wastewater management in Asian nations, and implement joint projects to solve shared problems. Six countries of, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia, and global institutions have joined AWaP. Japan Sewage Works Agency (JS) also joins as a supporting organization.

Two members of JS visited Myanmar in January 2019 at the request of MLIT. The visit's purpose is to meet with the Ministry of Construction (MOC.) I will report our stay in this newsletter.

In the meeting held in Naypyitaw, the capital of Myanmar, MLIT and MOC exchanged their opinions about the report form of AWaP. AWaP collects information from the participating countries, including Myanmar, in the first half of the following year through the modification of the report form.



Photo 1: The meeting at the MOC

This time, we were able to deliver presentations about JS and its business. After the presentations, representatives of MOC who got interested in JS at the first AWaP meeting last July asked many questions about the relationship between JS and related municipalities and the involvement of MLIT (Photo 1).

In Myanmar, only major cities like Yangon have sewerage systems. On the other hand, more and more newly built houses have installed septic tanks with them, even in provincial areas. We can say the awareness of wastewater treatment is increasing, and Myanmar might need a similar organization like JS to further promote sewage service in the future.

Before the meeting in Naypyitaw, we visited Yangon and toured the festival "Japan Myanmar Pwe Taw."

The construction bureau of Osaka city implements the grassroots project of JICA, "Yangon city sewage treatment plant management and maintenance capacity building improvement project." Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), the administrative body of Yangon, deals with sewerage services in Yangon.

At the festival, Osaka city and YCDC ran a booth together. We visited the booth and saw their activities enlightening people about the need for wastewater management (Photo 2.)



Photo 2: A staff of YCDC (on the left) demonstrates COD using a simplified water quality analyzer

The currency of Myanmar is Kyat (1 Japanese yen = 13.5 Kyat.) The exchange to Kyat is only possible within Myanmar, not directly from the Japanese yen. So we exchanged the Japanese yen to the US dollar in Japan, then changed the US dollar to Kyat in Myanmar. I was surprised to know big bills like 100 or 50 dollars had better exchange rates than small bills like five or one dollars, while their difference is very little in Japanese yen.

I know we cannot exchange torn bills in many countries, but I did not know some countries have different exchange rates depending on the bank bills.

It is the last newsletter of FY 2018.

FY 2018 was, so to speak, the turning point for the global operations of JS. The Japanese government proclaimed "Law relating to the promotion of Japanese business' entry into public infrastructure projects in the worldwide market" on June 1, 2018, and enforced it on August 31, 2018.

The new law prescribes nine corporations, including JS, shall conduct operations such as surveys at the planning stage to facilitate the participation of the Japanese businesses in the subsequent stages of design, construction, management, and O&M.

Besides, the law specifies JS shall provide technical support to planning developments, project executions, or O&M at the sewerage improvement projects carried out in foreign countries to achieve the purpose of the law by following the basic policy.

The enforced new law will provide many options to the Japanese government, municipalities, and private companies in their collaborative global contributions to wastewater technology and international water business and enhance the effect of these activities.

We will be happy if we can help you. We are looking forward to working with you again next year.