

creating a sustainable future

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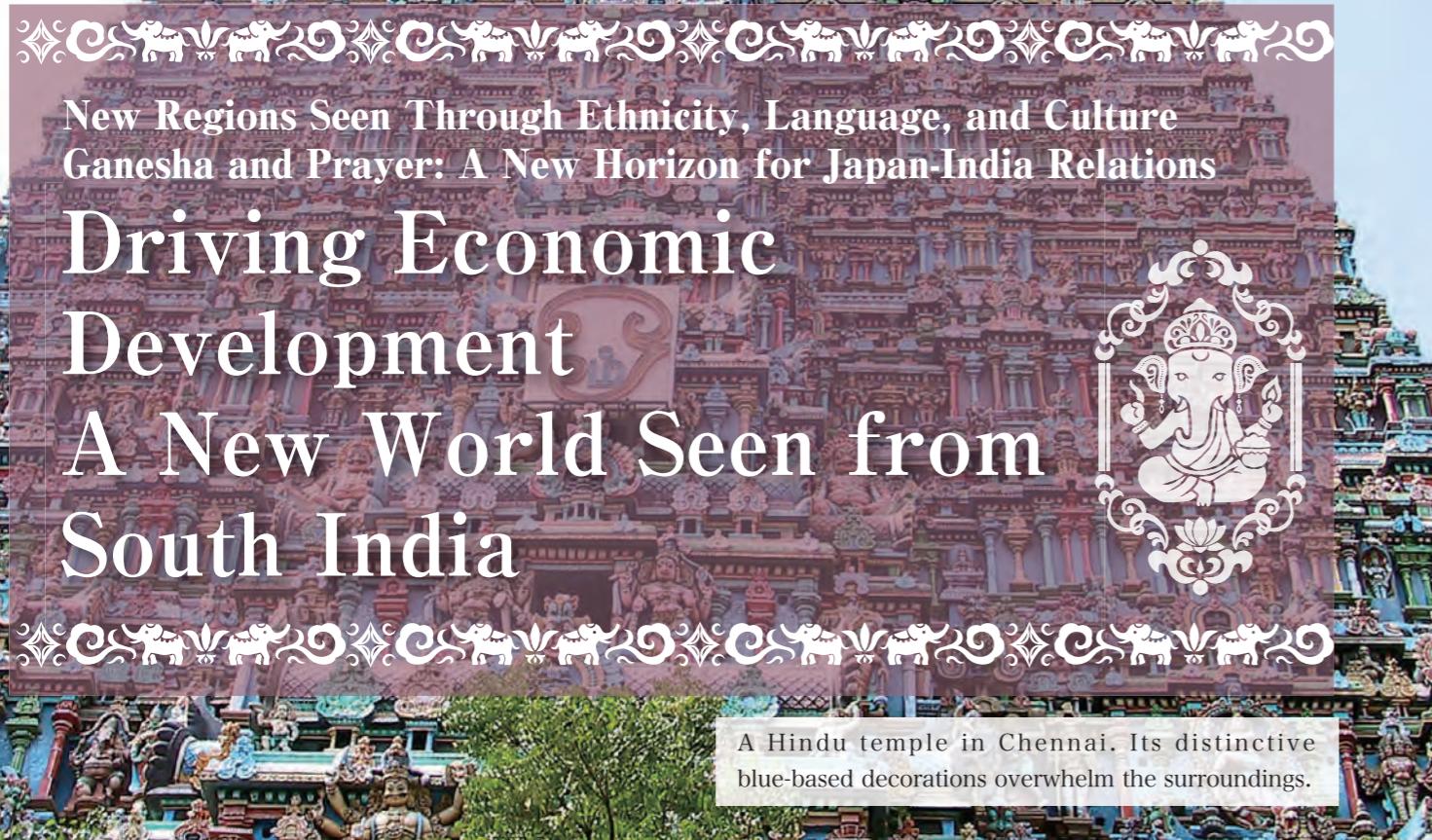
MSP Co., Ltd. Toho Remac Co., Ltd.

Japan Environmental Health Association

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UN NGO
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PICKUP



Air and the Ganesha Festival

Moving from sweltering Tokyo to South India, a refreshing breeze greeted me. Though India is often associated with intense heat, it felt like arriving at a summer retreat. Along the coastline of Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, laughter from people enjoying the waterfront never ceased, whether early morning or evening.

Tomorrow marks the main day of the Ganesha Festival across all of India. Colorful lights and decorations on street corners create a festive atmosphere. At the university I visited during the day, I gave two special lectures on the communicative potential of Japanese anime content. Students who listened intently and asked questions approached me even after the lectures ended. Their interest in Japanese anime stems not solely from its appeal.

It seemed to radiate the energy of young students in a society with a growing population, bringing a refreshing breeze to me as well. Perhaps it was also the unique atmosphere of South India.

What is “diversity”?

South India refers to the region located in the southern part of the Deccan Peninsula in India, but it is also a general term for the land of the Dravidians, a region distinguished from the rest of India in terms of language and culture. In terms of states, it refers to Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. It accounts for 19.31% of India's total area and 20% of its population. In addition to the Dravidians, many other people, including Indo-Aryans and Konkanis, live there and use the local languages.

Politically, they have their own voting patterns in elections, and it is well known that Prime Minister Modi placed great importance on the south in the June 2024 Indian general election in an attempt to break through the bedrock. The ruling party lost a large number of seats in this election and lost its absolute majority, partly due to its struggles in the south. Having pursued this distinct political path and achieved economic success, the South operates under different political dynamics than the North, dominated by Hindi-speaking forces centered around the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This divergence is so pronounced that discussions about South India's secession have surfaced.

The Meaning Behind the Elephant

On the streets of this southern city, preparations for the Ganesha Festival are in full swing. Celebrated across India, it is considered one of the most popular festivals. This is likely because it is positioned as a regional custom transcending religious boundaries. Lord Ganesha is a Hindu deity, whose Sanskrit name means “Lord of the Multitude.” He is also a god who brings worldly benefits, known as the “God of Wealth.” His form features an elephant's head and a plump human body. In Japan, he may have become widely known through the bestseller “The Elephant That Fulfills Dreams.” The duration of this popular deity's festival varies by region, ranging from three days to over ten days. People from different hometowns seem to enjoy their local Ganesha festivals in diverse ways.

Here in Chennai, where I am now, it lasts only one day. People from other regions mention this with regret, saying, “It's only one day here.” Street stalls sell flowers to offer to the deity and Ganesha statues of various sizes, which are bought one after another. These Ganeshas are welcomed into each home, treated as honored guests with grand hospitality, and then returned to the sea.

Voices of Prayer

In Chennai, the entire festival unfolds in a single day, culminating in the ritual of returning the deity to the sea. From evening into night, fires are lit to send off Lord Ganesha, prayers are offered, and gifts are presented, concluding with final supplications to the deity.

At the temple dedicated to Ganesha, prayers echoed intermittently. The deity, illuminated by multiple flames within the temple, appeared majestic amidst the surrounding flowers as people reverently pressed their palms together. Seeing people of various faiths join hands in prayer, I couldn't help but draw parallels with Japan's New Year temple visits. Amidst the resonant voices of prayer, I sensed the same powerful energy in the devotees' supplications as in the students'. It felt like the crystallization of sincere wishes from people striving to live in a society with a growing population. That brilliance made me feel the mystery of India once again.

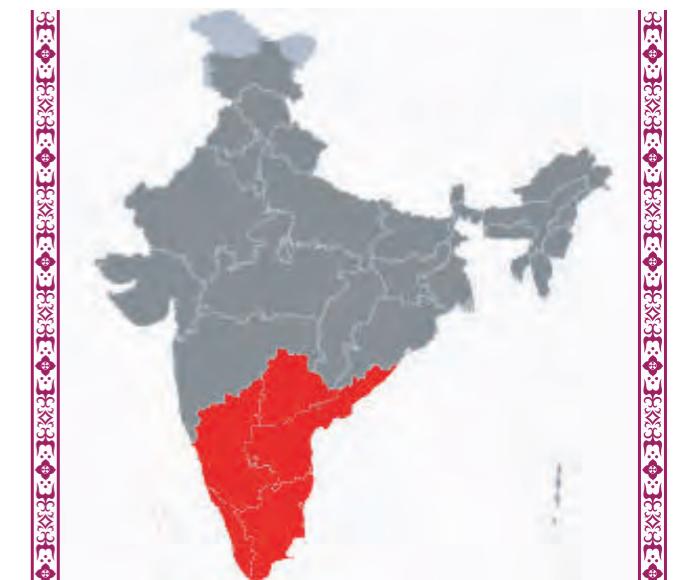
Japan-India Joint Vision

On August 29, when Indian Prime Minister Modi visited Japan and held summit talks with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba at the Prime Minister's Office, I was in Bengaluru, southern India. While the two leaders confirmed the strengthening of economic cooperation

between Japan and India, Tokyo Electron announced that its facility in this city—India's first dedicated to designing semiconductor manufacturing equipment and developing related software—would begin operations in September.

As part of supply chain restructuring and amid factors such as promoting exchanges with India, the “Joint Vision” for Japan-India outlined at the summit has positioned South India as a key region for Japan, likely leading to increased people-to-people exchanges.

At the summit, the two leaders issued a joint statement pledging to “build a mutually complementary relationship” toward “the safety and prosperity of the next generation.” This grand objective will be pursued through multifaceted approaches encompassing defense and security, economic cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. According to the Nikkei newspaper, Tokyo Electron plans to expand its design and software development hub for semiconductor manufacturing equipment to a staff of around 300 by 2027. Additionally, in Tamil Nadu state, where Chennai is the capital, Air Water will establish a new production plant to supply nitrogen, an essential element for semiconductor manufacturing.



<South India>

South India refers to the region located in the southern part of the Deccan Peninsula in India. It is a distinct region in terms of geography, language, and culture. Generally, it is defined as the area south of the Satpura Range, Narmada River, and Vindhya Range, encompassing the Deccan Plateau, Eastern Ghats, and Western Ghats.

Advancing in Eight Key Areas

These initiatives form part of Japan-India relations, which are based on the “Special Strategic Global Partnership” established by both governments in 2014. However, the “Joint Vision” announced this time, which outlines further strengthening of the relationship over the next decade, will serve as the new foundation. It centers on eight pillars: economy, next-generation mobility, healthcare, people-to-people exchanges, and others. In the economic sphere, it will establish an “Economic Security Initiative” to promote cooperation in material supply and technological partnerships.

Over the next decade, the target for private investment in India is set at 10 trillion yen. An “AI Cooperation Initiative” will also explore technological partnerships in artificial intelligence. Bengaluru, often called India’s Silicon Valley, is thriving in this IT sector. Located in the inland highlands with a savanna climate, it is significantly cooler than Tokyo in summer.

Large parks dot the city streets, lined with dense trees, creating a lush impression. Yet, alongside this greenery, skyscrapers—symbols of India’s unique bustle and economic development—soar skyward. This isn’t confined to the city center; in the surrounding expansive suburbs, buildings for emerging companies are springing up one after another.

Before the bullet train arrives

TSouth India, including Bengaluru, seems ready to welcome many people. The joint vision sets a goal of increasing personnel exchanges between the two sides to over 500,000 people within five years, but how will Japan handle the influx? India is a complex society, a multi-ethnic, multilingual nation with diverse religions and a caste system that remains a social reality. Southern India, in particular, differs significantly from the north centered on Delhi, with distinct political actions, languages, and ethnicities. We must recognize that another India exists there. Mutual understanding, including this awareness, is what our society demands.

Furthermore, it has been confirmed that the high-speed rail project under construction in India will adopt the new E10 series Shinkansen trains developed by JR East. This project will likely become a symbolic endeavor for India-Japan relations. And when the Shinkansen connects northern and southern

India, how will the landscape of India change? (JACE Editorial Department, Editor-in-Chief Tatsuya Hikichi)

Japan-India Joint Vision «Ministry of Foreign Affairs»

Building on the progress of the Japan-India Special Strategic Global Partnership to date, this vision outlines concrete directions for Japan-India cooperation over the next decade across eight priority areas: ① Economy, ② Economic Security, ③ Mobility, ④ Environment, ⑤ Technology and Innovation, ⑥ Healthcare, ⑦ People-to-People Exchanges, and ⑧ Local Government Exchanges.

① Economy: Set a target of ¥10 trillion in private investment in India. Strengthen cooperation in industrial competitiveness, finance, SMEs, agriculture/food, and ICT. Promote cooperation under the “Japan-India Cooperation Initiative for Sustainable Economic Development in Africa” and the “Indian Ocean-Africa Economic Zone Initiative.”

② Economic Security: Promoting cooperation through the “Japan-India Economic Security Initiative,” Japan-India Digital Partnership 2.0, and the Japan-India AI Cooperation Initiative (JAI). Advancing concrete cooperation in semiconductors, critical minerals, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, information and communications, clean energy, and emerging technologies.

③ Mobility: Launching the Next Generation Mobility Partnership (NGMP), including cooperation in railways, aviation, automobiles/roads, ships/ports, logistics, and urban development. Promoting disaster prevention cooperation.

④ Environment: Strengthening cooperation under the Japan-India Energy Partnership. Cooperation through the JCM, etc.

⑤ Technology & Innovation: Strengthening support for startups. Promoting cooperation in fields including space technology, agricultural science, and ICT.

⑥ Health: Holding a Bilateral Joint Committee. Promoting joint research and exchanges of medical professionals. Strengthening cooperation on UHC, including facilitating the supply of essential medicines, active pharmaceutical ingredients, and medical devices; medical infrastructure; and the UHC Knowledge Hub.

⑦ People-to-People Exchanges: Announced the “500,000 People in 5 Years” initiative for two-way personnel exchanges, including 50,000 Indian personnel. Strengthen exchanges of researchers and students. Promote tourism, cultural exchanges, and Japanese language education.

⑧ Local Government Exchanges: Promote new sister city relationships and exchange agreements between prefectures and states. Promote mutual visits by delegations at the prefectural and state levels.

JACE Person Interview



Dr. Chandni Bambhani

Economic development has led to an increase in average life expectancy.

Persistent gender disparities remain unresolved toward societal transformation through expanded education

Submitted by: Dr Chandni Bambhani Assistant Professor of Sociology
St Joseph’s University, Bengaluru-560027 India

Nevertheless, one unresolved challenge persists despite economic progress and its effects on different aspects of society: the widening gap between classes, castes, religious communities, and genders.

What changes have occurred regarding family and women, and their perspectives?

A common myth, propagated by mass media and some family scholars who mainly used the Indological approach by studying Indian society through sacred texts, is that joint families have historically been the dominant family structure in India. This was challenged as early as the 1960s by Pauline Kolenda, an American anthropologist renowned for her extensive research on Indian society, through her analysis of census data on household size and composition. The demographers and sociologists who have analysed the empirical data and conducted ethnographic studies continue to emphasise the regional variation in family structures across India. Joint families, or multigenerational households consisting of elderly parents living together with their married sons, were particularly rare, especially in southern India. Therefore, it is unsubstantiated to believe that families in South India have moved away from the traditional joint family system due to Westernisation, modernisation, and urbanisation, as the popular narrative about family changes in India suggests. What is clearly observable about changes in family size is the impact of demographic factors, such as later ages at marriage for both men and women, primarily due to educational expansion, along with declining fertility rates and women’s greater autonomy in preventing unwanted pregnancies. All these factors have contributed to smaller family sizes over time.

Regarding changes in women’s status, once again, the popular narrative might suggest that economic development in South India has significantly improved women’s standing. Undoubtedly, we observe greater participation of women in the labour force in South Indian states, especially in Tamil Nadu’s manufacturing sector and Karnataka and Telangana’s service sectors. However, very few women hold leadership roles in both the economy and politics. A recent survey by a recruitment and consultancy firm revealed that only about one-fifth of leadership roles in the IT sector, mainly based in Bangalore and Hyderabad, were occupied by women. This is the situation in a sector considered relatively female-friendly. Additionally, fewer than 10% of women serve as leaders in the legislative assemblies of South Indian states, with Karnataka having the lowest representation of women in the legislative assembly among the five states in the region. Besides, higher concentration of women in casual, informal, and unpaid roles within family enterprises, along with insufficient support such as maternity leave and safe working conditions, remains a challenge even in relatively more economically developed southern Indian states, as is the case across the rest of the country.



Jace Partners
Action 1

Solving Water and Energy Challenges

MSP Co., Ltd.



Mr. Takashi Yabe, Representative Director of MSP Corporation (hereinafter MSP) and Professor Emeritus at Tokyo Institute of Technology, has developed a technology capable of simultaneously addressing the global challenges of water scarcity and energy transition, based on his years of research and experience. This concept, centered on seawater desalination and magnesium extraction from the ocean, represents a challenge to achieve both reduced environmental impact and sustainable energy supply. As international recognition for its implementation progresses, attention is focused on whether this Japanese innovation can become a global standard.

the removed magnesium as a solid. This enables the production of pure water without polluting the environment. The compact and simple structure of the unit also makes it outstanding in terms of cost, operability, and scalability.



Desalination unit developed by MSP
(Dimensions: 2m x 1.5m x 0.7m)



Mr. Yabe was the only Japanese person selected as an "Environmental Hero" in the October 2, 2009 issue of Time magazine.

From "Discarding" Salt to "Utilizing" It

The key feature of MSP's desalination equipment is that it does not use the RO method (※1). Conventional approaches treated the salts in seawater as obstacles to desalination, discharging them as concentrated wastewater that inevitably caused environmental pollution. In contrast, MSP has succeeded in recovering

Energy from Magnesium

Magnesium extracted from seawater holds potential as a substitute for coal in thermal power generation, offering the possibility of achieving zero-CO₂ emission power generation systems. Furthermore, development of magnesium batteries is advancing. These batteries are lightweight and highly safe, promising implementation benefits such as extended flight times for drones and increased range for mobility devices.

Versatile Water Treatment Technology

This technology extends beyond desalination and magnesium extraction, also enabling the removal of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide from sewage. In disaster situations, a mobile truck-mounted unit is envisioned as an operational model capable of supplying water for approximately 50 households for 45 days. It also demonstrates high effectiveness in locations facing water supply challenges, such as remote islands, pleasure boats, and fishing vessels.

(※1)A method using a semipermeable membrane and high pressure to remove minute impurities and harmful substances contained in water.

JACE Partner



MSP Corporation President and CEO
Professor Emeritus, Tokyo Institute of Technology

International Attention and Implementation Roadmap

As of 2024, approximately 2.2 billion people worldwide lack access to safely managed drinking water. Against this backdrop of urgent need, the non-membrane water treatment approach proposed by Mr. Yabe is gaining recognition. Interest in MSP's technology is also growing in Middle Eastern countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. In a major international competition hosted by Abu Dhabi, a city in the UAE(※2), it is the only entry from Japan to pass the initial screening stage. Advancing to the final stage could secure local funding and lead to plant construction. This water treatment technology is now entering a phase where it aims for standardization and scale-up, driving both verification and commercialization on the international stage.

(※2)XPRIZE Water Crisis Competition※. A global technology and invention contest launched by the XPRIZE Foundation in March 2024 to solve the worldwide challenge of water scarcity. Total prize money: \$119 million.

Massage

To awaken the vast resources slumbering beneath the sea

As global warming intensifies, we need a stable energy infrastructure independent of fossil fuels. While solar and wind hold promise, they face constraints of time, weather, and location, and long-distance transmission involves losses and vulnerabilities. Therefore, I propose a method to store and transport magnesium as chemical energy. The world's oceans contain 1,800 trillion tons of magnesium (equivalent to 100,000 years' worth of oil). To harness this vast, valuable resource for humanity's future and to deliver water to those currently suffering from water shortages, we are committed to redoubling our efforts and introducing the developed system into society.

About MSP Co., Ltd.

- Address: Ginza Otake Business Center 2F, 1-22-11 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061
- Establishment: Development, sales, and import/export of new energy-related products
- Business Activities: Development, sales, and import/export of new energy-related products
Development, sales, and import/export of magnesium-related products
Development, sales, and import/export of seawater desalination-related products
Development, sales, and import/export of wastewater purification-related products, etc.

<https://www.magsplanet.com/>



Jace Partners
Action 2

Japanese beauty creates a sustainable world

Expressing the SDGs with “brocade shoes”

Toho Remac Co., Ltd.



A Corporate Culture of Change and Innovation

Toho Remac's strength lies in its approach of building systems with change as a given. We've integrated product planning and production into our sales and marketing business model, and shifted production bases to align with market trends. Each time, we've updated the entire flow of procurement, manufacturing, sales, and design to create products that resonate with consumers and society. To make the essential daily action of “walking” more comfortable for people. Our products target all generations. From men, women, and children to seniors, we continue to innovate and create products that are gentle on the feet.

Promoting Japanese Culture Through Shoes

Recently, we've been working to share Japanese culture with the world through shoes. We fuse the patterns of “Kinran,” a traditional material deeply connected to Kyoto and Edo culture, into contemporary footwear. The brand name is “KINRUN (Gold Runs),” with the catchphrase

“Japanese Beauty, Walking the World.” These art-inspired shoes will be actively promoted to inbound tourists, aiming to convey Japan's aesthetic sensibility to people worldwide.

“Kinran” refers to



“Kinran” is a general term for luxurious brocade fabrics woven with gold leaf, gold foil, or gold thread as patterns. Introduced to Japan during the Muromachi period, it was primarily produced in areas like Kyoto's Nishijin district and used for Buddhist altar fittings, scroll mounting, ceremonial robes, and similar items.

Never Forget the SDGs Perspective

The products of Miyagawa Brush Manufacturing are selected according to their purpose, using different types of bristles such as boar, horse, pig, and goat hair to achieve maximum performance. For example, Ms. Miyagawa, a craftsman, listens intently to the requests of various customers, such as painters who are particular about precision, sushi chefs, and people suffering from atopic dermatitis. Based on this, she meticulously proposes the optimal brush type, hardness, hair quality, and length. Her ability to identify the essence of the issue and propose the optimal solution is truly that of a consultant.



Gold Brocade Shoes

Actions for the Future

Action ①: Being True to Oneself

So everyone can be themselves. We turn needs like “I wanted

JACE Partner



Toho Remac Co., Ltd.
President Nobutake Kasai (right)
Chairman Shoji Kasai (left)

In October 2025, Toho Remac received the “SDGs Activity Certification” from JACE. The photo shows the award ceremony.

Massage

On Receiving SDGs Activity Certification: We Want to Share a Sustainable Culture with the World

We anticipate that the SDGs Activity Certification we have received will enhance the social credibility of our company and brand both domestically and internationally, establishing us as a symbol of sustainable activity. It will also advance the sharing of values with companies, local governments, and international organizations, expanding possibilities for new collaboration and co-creation. As a post-certification business plan, we hope the future-weaving brand “KINRUN” will contribute to creating new value, and that its inspiring creations will serve as a catalyst to revitalize the market. We will continue our efforts to spread the beauty of Japan, where sustainability is a cultural value, throughout the world. We ask for your continued support for “Japanese Beauty, Walking the World.”

About Toho Remac Co., Ltd.

- Address (Head Office): 3-42-6 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-8513
- Established: 1958
- Business Activities: Wholesale of women's and men's shoes
Real estate business
Renewable energy business
- Notes: Listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Standard Market

<https://toho-lamac.co.jp/>

a product like this” or “Wouldn't it be great if there was a product like this” into products, supporting a rich life.

Action ②: Building a Caring Society

We have made donations to activities preventing child abuse and to tree-planting initiatives for disaster prevention forests that mitigate tsunami damage. We are striving to realize a society where fewer people find themselves in socially vulnerable positions.

Action ③: Solving Footwear Concerns

We aim to resolve previously unsolvable foot and shoe concerns through the integration of digital technology, offering solutions via footwear.

Action ④: Together with People Worldwide

We produce products tailored to each country and region's characteristics at partner factories around the world. We work alongside local factories to improve labor conditions and working environments in each area.

Action ⑤: Sustainability

Related to the above, we are working to use recycled materials made from discarded PET bottles and reduce plastic packaging.



Jace Partners
Action 3



Supporting healthy and safe daily living from your living environment

Japan Environmental Health Association Sick House Diagnosis Association

The Japan Environmental Health Organization and the Sick House Diagnosis Association, both general incorporated associations, share the common philosophy of safeguarding health and the safety of the living environment. They contribute to society through research and investigation, awareness-raising activities, expert training, and certification systems.

Japan Environmental Health Organization Initiatives

① Environmental Health Awareness, Research, and Professional Development

The Japan Environmental Health Organization conducts research and disseminates information focusing on the impact of living environments on human health, including chemical sensitivity and allergic diseases. It scientifically examines risks

lurking in daily life—such as building materials, furniture, air quality, ventilation, humidity, mold, and chemicals—and communicates this information clearly to consumers and businesses, thereby promoting environmental health awareness.

② Operation of the Qualification System

We operate certification programs to train specialized professionals engaged in environmental health practice, such as Environmental Allergy

Advisors and Mold and Dust Mite Measurement Technicians. Through cultivating these specialists, we enable more direct consumer awareness campaigns and the provision of safe, reliable products and services.

③ Contribution to the SDGs

We plan and operate the “Local SDGs Action Forum” as an information dissemination initiative aimed at creating a society where everyone can live healthily. We gather information on SDGs-related seminars and events happening in local communities.

Initiatives of the Sick House Diagnosis Association

① Environmental Health Awareness, Research, and Professional Development

The Sick House Diagnosis Association is a specialized organization addressing health risks stemming from living environments, particularly issues surrounding sick house syndrome. Connecting diverse stakeholders including consumers and construction companies, its main pillars of activity are prevention and countermeasures, awareness-raising and consultation support, and expert training and

certification. It administers the “Sick House Diagnosis Specialist” certification, equipping individuals with specialized knowledge in diagnosing and improving living environments for societal benefit. To support these specialists in handling consumer inquiries and conducting residential surveys and diagnoses, the association also operates a dedicated consultation desk.

② National Organization Management for Experts

“Syndrome Diagnosticians” reflects an intent to enhance regional responsiveness beyond activities solely within the central organization. This structure is crucial for implementing sick house countermeasures tailored to each region’s building materials, climate, and lifestyle. Through workshops and exchange meetings, it promotes knowledge updates and technical sharing among members and related specialists, demonstrating the association’s commitment to “disseminating the latest technologies and insights.” Such a continuing education system is essential for maintaining and improving diagnostic accuracy and response capabilities.



JACE Partner

Massage



Sick House Diagnosis Association Representative Director Norio Kanda

Preventing sick house syndrome is crucial.

A current challenge is that many people only contact our association after developing sick building syndrome or chemical sensitivity. Addressing these conditions after onset is difficult, requiring significant time and expense for improvement, and often leaving sufferers unsure where to seek help. Awareness and Platform Enhancement: Moving forward, we aim to focus on preventive awareness campaigns. We also plan to develop a deeper and broader platform where certified diagnosticians can share information within the network and engage in activities that contribute to prevention and improvement.

JACE Partner

Massage



Japan Environmental Health Organization (JEBO) Mr. Kazuhiro Takao, Managing Director

We will continue to focus our efforts on raising awareness about allergy countermeasures.

Food allergies are being taken very seriously among young mothers, but there’s a noticeable gap in urgency: longstanding conditions like atopic dermatitis and asthma have become so commonplace that they’re almost taken for granted. I want to reexamine this situation where atopic dermatitis, despite being extremely distressing for those affected, rarely gets discussed. Sick building syndrome in the late 1990s differs from current cases in terms of symptom presentation and target substances, necessitating a fresh reassessment. We aim to develop preventive measures for the general public, focusing on how to manage daily life effectively.

About NPO Asia Children's Welfare Association

■ Address: 2F Nihonbashi Ohtomi Building, 13-7 Nihonbashi Ootemachō, Chūō-ku, Tokyo 103-0011

■ Business Activities: Awareness campaigns regarding sick building syndrome issues

Research and investigation into sick building syndrome issues

Evaluation of various housing-related products

Public relations and information provision

■ Branch List: Hokkaido / Tohoku / North Kanto / South Kanto / Chubu / Kansai / Chugoku Branch / Kyushu

<https://www.sicklife.jp/>

About the Japan Environmental Health Organization

■ Address: 2F Nihonbashi Kisen Building, 1-11-5 Nihonbashi Horidomecho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0012

■ Certification Programs: “Environmental Allergy Advisor”

“Mold & Dust Mite Measurement Specialist”

“Chemical Sensitivity Supporter”

“Apartment Disaster Prevention Advisor”

■ Hosted Events: “Everyone’s Allergy EXPO”, “Hot Spring Disaster Prevention”, “Zero Disaster-Related Deaths Forum”

<https://jeho.or.jp/>

JACE Report



The Rice Riots of the Reiwa Era: Climate Change and the True Value of Rice Paddy Fields

Rice has disappeared from store shelves.

In the summer of 2025, Japanese dining tables faced an unexpected crisis. Rice vanished from supermarkets nationwide, sparking daily news coverage dubbed the "Reiwa Rice Riots." This problem is believed to have arisen from a complex interplay of diverse factors: yen depreciation, rising production costs, an aging farming population and labor shortages, and shifts in lifestyles and consumption trends. The rice production reduction policy, in effect for nearly half a century since 1971, significantly reduced both rice paddy acreage and rice output. Although the policy officially ended in 2018, the continued guidance on optimal production levels and support for crop conversion effectively maintain the reduction. Compounding this, frequent heatwaves and abnormal weather have severely degraded rice quality. The fundamental risk lies in the increasingly severe global climate change.

The Need for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Questioned by Declining Rice Quality

According to a report released by the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service[※1], the average temperature during the summer of 2023 (June to August) was 16.77°C , 0.66°C higher than the long-term average, marking the highest on record (Figure 1). Across Japan, rice suffered repeated heat damage, leading to a significant decline in the proportion of Grade 1 rice[※2]. Rice grading standards are determined by factors such as the percentage of whole grains, damaged grains, and foreign matter contamination. Prolonged high temperatures during the flowering and ripening stages of rice increase the number of white immature grains (which appear cloudy white) and cracked grains (with internal fissures), significantly degrading quality.

Rice is inherently vulnerable to climate change. Japan has implemented various adaptation measures, including breeding improvements, water management, fertilization techniques, and adjusting planting times. However, recent climate change is progressing at a pace exceeding these projections, increasingly outpacing these efforts. Conventional methods alone are no longer sufficient to keep pace. Serious impacts are emerging across multiple fronts: not only poor grain quality, but also increased pest damage like overwintering stink bugs and the expansion of giant apple snail habitats, along with rising disease incidence. Adaptation measures like breeding improvements and production method innovations are now inadequate. A dual approach is essential: mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must be implemented alongside adaptation.

The Current State of Climate Action: A Decade That Will Shape Our Future

The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (2023) once again warns of the severity of global warming. According to the report, the global average temperature, using 1850–1900 as the baseline, rose by 1.1°C during 2011–2020 (Figure 2). To limit warming to 1.5°C by mid-century, urgent policy shifts and decarbonization are essential. The report also predicts losses and damages from advancing global warming, along with humans and natural systems reaching their adaptation limits. Whether warming can be held to 1.5°C or 2°C depends largely on cumulative carbon emissions before achieving net-zero CO₂ emissions and the level of greenhouse gas emission reductions over this decade. Scientific projections also indicate that the choices and actions taken over the next decade will determine the state of the global environment for millennia to come.

Rice is inherently vulnerable to climate change. Japan has implemented various adaptation measures, including breeding improvements, water management, fertilization techniques, and adjusting planting times. However, recent climate change is progressing at a pace exceeding these projections, increasingly outpacing these efforts. Conventional methods alone are no longer sufficient to keep pace. Serious impacts are emerging across multiple fronts: not only poor grain quality, but also increased pest damage like overwintering stink bugs and the expansion of giant apple snail habitats, along with rising disease incidence. Adaptation measures like breeding improvements and production method innovations are now inadequate. A dual approach is essential: mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must be implemented alongside adaptation.

[Fig. 3]



※1: Copernicus Climate Change Service <https://x.gd/KYQL3>

※2: Rice with a whole kernel rate of 70% or higher, moisture content of 15% or lower, and meeting inspection standards for damaged grains and foreign matter content

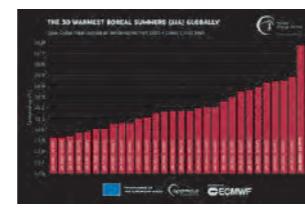
※3: COP15 Official Website <https://x.gd/XFkBb> World Wide Fund for Nature Japan (WWF Japan)

2025 House of Councillors Election Platform Comparison (Climate Change Measures) 2025/07/17 <https://x.gd/ffEtP>

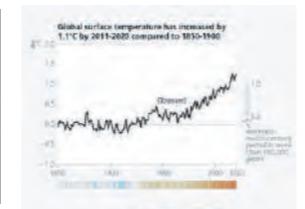
< Figure 1 Source > Copernicus Climate Change Service: Summer 2023: the hottest on record <https://x.gd/yXV1b>

< Figure 2 Source > IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report <https://x.gd/n5g0E>

< Figure 4 Source > ICLEI Japan [Event Report] Ramsar Convention 15th Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) <https://x.gd/4mAyw>



[Fig. 1]



[Fig. 2]

The Ramsar Convention and the Biodiversity Supported by Rice Paddy Fields

In the summer of 2025, while all of Japan was reeling from the "Reiwa Rice Riots," the 15th Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention was held at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe[※3], where the future of wetlands was discussed (Fig. 3) (Fig. 4). The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty adopted at a conference held in Ramsar, Iran, on February 2, 1971. Its official name is the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat," and its purpose is to promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands of international importance.

Japan also has many Ramsar wetlands, some of which include rice paddies. Rice paddies play a vital role as stopover sites, wintering grounds, and breeding areas for migratory birds, as well as habitats for diverse organisms like aquatic insects and fish. They are not only treasure troves of biodiversity but also provide numerous benefits to our lives through functions such as carbon storage, water purification, and flood control.

Traditional Japanese rice farming has, in effect, contributed to biodiversity conservation. However, in recent years, many wetlands worldwide face the threat of disappearance. To conserve wetlands and promote their sustainable use, local communities and governments are collaborating on wetland restoration projects, habitat management, and educational activities across various regions. Specifically regarding paddy fields, however, declining biodiversity due to factors like increasing abandoned farmland, conversion to dry fields, and the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers is a growing concern. Balancing biodiversity conservation with agricultural practices has become a major challenge.

Japan's Environmental Challenges

Despite being global issues, environmental problems like climate change tend not to become major points of contention in Japanese politics or election campaigns. The reasons why environmental issues rarely take center stage are complex and cannot be attributed to a single factor. Other domestic issues, such as measures to address the declining birthrate and aging population and economic revitalization, are perceived as more urgent, and environmental issues may not be given high priority. Another difficulty is that it is hard to see the effects of environmental measures because they must be balanced with industrial structure, and because environmental issues themselves take a long time to resolve.

Looking at examples from other countries, climate change measures have become major election issues in some cases, highlighting a clear difference in awareness compared to Japan. In Germany, climate policy was a central issue in the 2021 federal elections, and the Green Party made historic gains. In the United States, former President Biden's administration championed the Green New Deal, and debates surrounding it became a major focus. In Japan, however, environmental issues are rarely discussed on a similar scale. Media coverage is limited, and the structure for raising public awareness and interest is insufficient.

To Connect the Future

The cost of ignoring environmental issues is quietly yet surely threatening our way of life. Restoring lost nature requires enormous effort and expense. The rice riots of the Reiwa era have once again demonstrated that climate change is not some distant future threat to food security, but a reality intimately connected to our daily lives. To protect the irreplaceable natural environment of rice paddies and the richness of ecosystems, it is vital that each of us develops an awareness of the issues and takes action toward realizing a sustainable society. Responsible action is needed now to pass on a rich natural environment and food culture to the next generation.(Yumi Sato, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, JACE Editorial Department)

[Fig. 3]



※1: Copernicus Climate Change Service <https://x.gd/KYQL3>

※2: Rice with a whole kernel rate of 70% or higher, moisture content of 15% or lower, and meeting inspection standards for damaged grains and foreign matter content

※3: COP15 Official Website <https://x.gd/XFkBb> World Wide Fund for Nature Japan (WWF Japan)

2025 House of Councillors Election Platform Comparison (Climate Change Measures) 2025/07/17 <https://x.gd/ffEtP>

< Figure 1 Source > Copernicus Climate Change Service: Summer 2023: the hottest on record <https://x.gd/yXV1b>

< Figure 2 Source > IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report <https://x.gd/n5g0E>

< Figure 4 Source > ICLEI Japan [Event Report] Ramsar Convention 15th Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) <https://x.gd/4mAyw>



"Fun" and "Thrill" make you love the world even more!

See the World Through a Student's Eyes: South Korea

Young sensibilities will be our compass for the future



Ferris University
Hikichi Laboratory

Seoul Subway Line 2 Our Very Own Guide Map



Seoul Subway Line 2 opened in 1980 (full-line opening in 1984).
It connects 51 stations along a 60.2 km loop encircling Seoul.



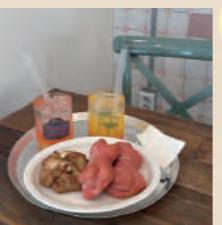
Sinchon

Yonsei Road leading to Yonsei University is a student district lined with cafes and eateries★ During the Yonsei-Korea University rivalry season.



Dongdaemun

By day, enjoy tranquil views steeped in history, while by night, revel in the magical scenery illuminated by lights and the glow of food stalls.



Hapjeong

"All the Ugly Cookies" A popular cafe known for its thick, adorable Korean-style cookies and ribbon-shaped salt bread.



서울
Seoul



Seongsu



Jamsil

"Daisy Zeke's Pop-Up Cafe" □ Both the cakes and the shop's interior were adorable, making it an exciting space!



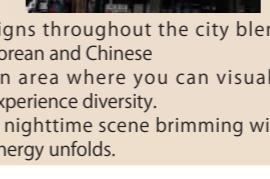
About a 15-minute walk from the station, you'll see the Han River flowing through central Seoul.

A spot offering panoramic views of landmarks like Namsan Tower.



Daerim

A quiet neighborhood with a relaxed atmosphere. Near the station, a mandu shop bustling with locals.



Original Hejangchon Bone-Roasted Hanpan Kamjatang A hidden gem tucked away in the office district frequented only by locals. Large windows open wide for an unbeatable sense of openness. The generously loaded kamjatang is absolutely exquisite.



Signs throughout the city blend Korean and Chinese An area where you can visually experience diversity. A nighttime scene brimming with energy unfolds.

What is a "matjip"? It refers to a restaurant known for its delicious food.

Social Issues BOOK REVIEW

Recommended Books for Learning
About Social Issues



<New Edition Hayakawa Bunko>

Flowers for Algernon

Author: Daniel Keyes
Translator: Fusa Obo
Publisher: Hayakawa Shobo

What does the nature of education and our interactions with others bring about?

I first encountered this book in middle school. I vividly remember devouring it all in one go while studying for exams. Set in 1950s New York City, the story unfolds through the progress reports of Charlie, the intellectually disabled protagonist. Charlie, a 32-year-old bakery clerk with the mental capacity of a toddler, is told one day that he could become smarter if he undergoes the same groundbreaking brain surgery as Algernon the mouse. After the surgery, Charlie suddenly transforms into a genius.

"Is having a low IQ a bad thing? If so, is having a high IQ a good thing? And does that lead to happiness as a person?" As Charlie's intellectual level changed, so did the book's writing style. Confronted with these profound themes, I couldn't stop crying for a long time after finishing it.

Even after finishing school and becoming a working adult and

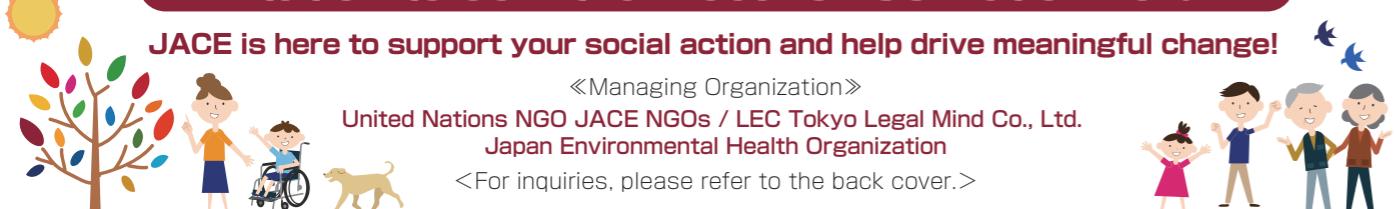
family member, I occasionally pick it up and reread it. No matter how many times I read it, I find new lessons and insights in the world of Charlie, delicately depicted through the lens of the circumstances of disabled people at the time, science, love, and friendship.

Education that imparts knowledge is certainly necessary. But what exactly does moral education, which nurtures character, entail? What is truly essential for cultivating the human heart?

I cannot help but ponder what is required of us to acknowledge the existence of others and realize a society where diverse people coexist. Simultaneously, a quiet gratitude for being alive and sustained through our connections with others gradually spreads within me, and with each reading, it feels as though the folds of my heart deepen.

Invitation to Join the "Local SDGs Action Forum"

JACE is here to support your social action and help drive meaningful change!



«Managing Organization»

United Nations NGO JACE NGOs / LEC Tokyo Legal Mind Co., Ltd.
Japan Environmental Health Organization

<For inquiries, please refer to the back cover.>

Support ① Information Dissemination

We actively share articles, videos, and updates about the SDG activities of participating organizations across various media platforms, including our website. There are cases where the forum secretariat conducts interviews and publishes the content.

Support ③ Assistance in Organizing SDG-Related Events

We offer various forms of support for SDG-related seminars and events, including sponsorship, collaboration, and publicity. Examples of Past Events: ●Symposium on LGBTQ Awareness – Addressing challenges and promoting inclusivity. ●Learning SDGs Together with People with Disabilities ●Inclusive Disaster Preparedness at the Onsen Expo

Support ② Participation in Seminars & Networking Events

LEC Tokyo Legal Mind Co., Ltd. provides opportunities to deepen and expand knowledge of the SDGs through specialized seminars. These sessions explore local case studies and social issues, fostering collaboration and meaningful discussions among participating organizations. Our goal is to create an interactive platform that inspires and strengthens participants' initiatives.

Support ④ Assistance in Presenting at United Nations Agencies

Organizations participating in this forum have the opportunity to engage with and present their initiatives at global institutions such as: ● ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) ● UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) ● We provide comprehensive support to help organizations prepare for these international opportunities, ensuring they maximize their impact on the global stage.

※1 "ECOSOC" (United Nations Economic and Social Council): One of the principal UN bodies responsible for making decisions and recommendations on economic and social issues. JACE is officially recognized by the UN as an organization with "Special Consultative Status" under ECOSOC.

※2 "UN Women" (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women): A UN agency dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls worldwide. JACE is recognized by the UN as an organization with "Consultative Status" under UN Women.

► Editorial Room ◀

About the JACE Editorial Department

Enhancing Communication on SDGs Across Regions

Achieving the SDGs relies heavily on local initiatives. It is essential to develop policies that reflect the unique characteristics and realities of each region while fostering collaboration among stakeholders both within and beyond local communities. To support these efforts, JACE NGOs established the JACE Editorial Department, dedicated to covering local SDG initiatives, raising awareness, and generating engagement and support. By widely sharing impactful stories, we aim to strengthen cooperation and inspire action. Currently, our editorial team is actively engaged in interviews, article production, and the publication of our official journal, JACE Journal.

Editorial Committee Member Directory

Tatsuya Hikichi	Kazutaka Otsuki	Hiromi Satou	Junko Ichikawa	Minako Kato
Takahiro Karasawa	Hikaru Kurata	Yuiwa Kurata	Akiho Sakamoto	Tadanori Shiota
Satoshi Suzuki	Hisashi Nishida	Ami Hakukawa	Yoichi Seshita	Yui Mochizuki

Feature Articles by Our Editorial Committee!



Showcasing Local SDG Initiatives

On the Local SDGs Action Forum special website, JACE Editorial Committee members conduct interviews with organizations and individuals actively promoting SDGs in various regions. These articles highlight their passions, initiatives, and efforts to advance sustainability at the local level. If you are interested in local SDG initiatives or are actively involved in sustainability efforts, you will find many inspiring examples and valuable ideas. Be sure to check them out!

Nominate an SDG Initiative for Coverage!

Help Us Promote SDG Initiatives in Local Communities

Do you know of organizations or companies actively working on SDGs in your area? We welcome both self-recommendations and third-party nominations! The JACE Editorial Department will conduct interviews and feature their activities on our website. For more details, visit the Local SDGs Action Forum Special Website:

<https://sdgs-forum.jp/article/>

Do They Know It? - Editor-in-Chief, Tatsuya Hikichi



In Chennai, South India, lies Tara Books, a small publishing house attracting global attention. Nestled in a quiet residential neighborhood, this hub for handcrafted picture books reaches out to the world. Within its serene space, free from the clamor, picture books translated into various languages line the shelves. Examining posters and postcards in detail, one loses track of time. The diverse colors, the warmth of handcrafted work, and the profound depth of India made me vow to return again.

◆ Greetings ◆



Makihiro Sakata
Chairperson,
JACE NGOs

We are truly grateful for the opportunity to share our message in this journal. As an international NGO with special consultative status with ECOSOC, we remain committed to our mission of realizing a sustainable society through our ongoing activities. In the pursuit of global peace, collaboration with various individuals, organizations, and governments is essential. With the warm support of our dedicated partners, we will continue to contribute to the international community. We sincerely appreciate your continued understanding and cooperation and look forward to working together toward a better future.

◆ Cover photo ◆



JACE's activities supporting Cambodian border refugees near the Cambodian-Thai border (conflict zone). For local children, the organization provides classes and educational materials to restore learning opportunities, along with literacy programs.

◆ About JACE ◆



◆Name: JACE NGOs

- ◆Group Organization : ●JACE, a U.S. public interest corporation
 - NPO Japan-Asia Cultural Exchange Association
 - NPO Japan America Cultural Exchanges
 - Japan-Asia Cultural Exchange Association
 - Japan Africa Cultural Exchanges

◆representative : Masahiro Sakata

◆Location : ●Headquarters: UN Building, 10-19 Honmachi, Utsunomiya-shi, Tochigi

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- Aichi Branch: 1402, Residia Higashizakura II, 2-17-25 Higashizakura, Higashi-ku, Nagoya, Aichi, Japan
- Okayama Branch: 1F, 473-5 Nihonbaru, Tsuyama, Okayama
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- Bangladesh Office : 78, Motijheel C/A(11th Floor), Dhaka-1000
- Cambodia Office : PHNOM PENH TUOL LOUK TUEK LAK MUOY OU THUM
- Hong Kong Office : BLKA, 15/F HILLIERCOMM. BLDG, 65-67 BONHAM STRAND EAST, SHEUNG WAN, HONG KONG
- Ghana Office : HNO 45 TESHIE NUNGUA ALLOWAY STREET ACCRA GREATER ACCRA P.O.BOX TNE 221 ACCRA GA/R GHANA
- Democratic Republic of the Congo Office : Au n° 34 de l'avenue du Commerce, Commune de la Gombe VILLE-PROVINCE DE KINSHASA/RDC



◆ Membership Information ◆

JACE is looking for individuals, organizations and corporate members who are interested in our activities. By You will be able to engage in the following activities through JACE: ➔Participate in activities that align with the SDGs as a UN organization; ➔Exchange with the rest of the world through our Asian support activities and UNWOMEN activities; ➔Enhance your corporate value through participation in international activities; ➔Utilize JACE's broad international network to expand your activities; ➔Have the opportunity to make statements to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and more.

«For More Details, Please Visit Our Website»

United Nations NGO JACE NGOs (Japan Branch)
NPO Japan-Asia Cultural Exchange Association
TEL : 028-348-3666 / E-Mail : contact@jacengos.org

<https://jacengos.org/>

