

Abstract Title: Aarhus Convention and Japanese EIA systems

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Abstract

Aarhus Convention requires a society to have good (1) access to environmental information, (2) participation in the decision making process, and (3) access to the court system for sustainable development. Public concerns on their environment should be respected. EIAs have to be applied to every type of human action because even a small action, such as building bio-facility, might have big impacts to the environment. Contradictory to this, projects applied to EIA are very limited in Japan. This is the big shortcomings of Japanese EIA systems and the problem of the democratic system. As the 2020 Olympic Games will be held in Tokyo, national government has been preparing for this event. The national stadium, the legacy of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics Games was dismantled to build a massive and expensive new stadium. But, this plan was not sustainable in terms of environmental, social and economic impacts. Being criticized from the majority of public, Prime Minister Abe abolished the plan and ordered to make another plan in July, 2015. But the new process is also not transparent. If the process was not conducted well, people should have the right to make an objection. For good practice of IA, having good information disclosure and public participation process are not enough. This should be going with good access to court or objection systems. The author examines the current domestic EIA systems and those in international cooperation field such as JICA system from the viewpoint of three requirements of the Aarhus Convention.

Abstract Summary Statement

Aarhus Convention is a norm for sustainable development and IA should be the major way. Various Japanese EIA systems, domestic ones and international cooperation field, were assessed by this point.

Brief Bio:

He is Professor at Chiba University of Commerce, and Professor emeritus of Tokyo Institute of Technology. His major is environmental planning and policy making focusing on public participation and consensus building. He worked as President of IAIA (2008-2009). He had been Examiner for the Environmental and Social Consideration System of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for a decade since 2006.

IAIA: International Association for Impact Assessment