

NGOs – Key Players in Fighting Global Environmental Challenges

Challenges posed by the global environment to the world include a wide array of issues ranging from how to reduce CO₂ emissions tied to global warming to the protection of biological diversity that is crucial to maintain economic growth for the survival of human civilization. For solving these issues effectively, we need a competent team consisting of a variety of experts, namely economists, physicists, biologists, engineers, etc. NGOs provide those human resources with expertise.

The Club of Rome, one of the oldest environmental NGOs, published a report on the limits to growth early in the 1970s warning the governments of advanced nations against potential environmental damage possibly caused by their high economic growth to the detriment of the survival of humankind. After the financial crisis that triggered concern about greedy capitalism seemingly contradictory to human welfare and the environment, NGOs have renewed and restrengthened their function to achieve a balance between growth and the environment. People associated with the Club of Rome such as its current secretary general, Dr. Ian Johnson, feature its major role in helping to restore the global environment in their articles commemorating the new mission of JEF (publisher of *Japan SPOTLIGHT*) acting as the Secretariat of the Club's Japanese national association since last autumn.

The COP10 meeting of parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya last October highlighted the critical importance of biodiversity in economic growth. Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, executive secretary of the CBD, and a team of three coauthors led by Dr. Pavan Sukhdev, a distinguished UNEP expert, strongly advocate the importance of protecting biodiversity for the sake of human civilization. A few other prominent experts on biodiversity from various NGOs, including World Resources Institute and WWF Japan, showcase their roles and missions in helping to conserve biodiversity.

Readers can recognize that we need an interdisciplinary approach to these issues and NGOs are successful in providing creative and diverse ideas for resolving such complicated issues.

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