



JAPAN RESOURCES

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Japan Resources is available on a website in English.

You can read new articles and announcements on CUJ's

English website: <http://www.nishoren.org/en>



Consumers Union of Japan

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45th Year Anniversary of Consumers Union of Japan: Local Roots & Local Action to Oppose Globalization

Symposium to Celebrate the 45th Year Anniversary of Consumers Union of Japan: Local Roots & Local Action to Oppose Globalization

45 years ago, Consumers Union of Japan was established based on consumer's rights in order to create a sound and healthy future for our children. Over the years, we have faced a surging wave of issues caused by globalization. We have long sensed the impending crisis for rural areas, where the decline has been most noticeable. It is clear that the crisis has now reached people in all areas of Japan, from farm villages to cities. In light of this, we hold this symposium to once again focus on building a society and an economy where people can earn an honest living and return to living locally.

The spotlight is on taking action to create recycling communities all over the country that are not shaken by globalization, represented by the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement.

Please join us for an event to learn about different examples of activities ranging from food and health care to local off-grid energy production.

Speakers:

Kanno Yoshide (Farmer from Yamagata prefecture)

Satou Kenji (Managing Director, Consumer's Co-operative PAL System Tokyo)

Hinoke Morio (Board Member for Vegetable Section, One Pack CSA)

Time: June 14, 2014 (Saturday) 13:00-15:00

Place: Tokyo Shigoto Center, lidabashi station (JR Chuo line)

Map: http://vitaljapan.com/map_tokyoshigoto.htm

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Letter From Consumers In Japan To Protest Against GMOs In Bangladesh

Prime Minister of Bangladesh
Hon'ble Sheikh Hasina

Embassy of Bangladesh
4-15-15 Meguro, Meguro-Ku, Tokyo-153-0063
Fax No: +81-03-5704-1696

May 28, 2014

Japanese Citizens' Network for Sustainable Food & Agriculture

Amagasa Keisuke

Kawata Masaharu

We are a network of concerned Japanese consumers, farmers and experts with a strong desire to protect biological diversity and promote sustainable food and farming. Our network includes Consumers Union of Japan, No! GMO Campaign as well as co-ops and farmers organizations in different regions of Japan.

We recently discovered that your country has decided to promote genetically modified organisms (GMO) and introduced GM eggplant (BT brinjal) to selected farmers in different areas in Bangladesh in January, 2014. Consumers in Japan are strongly opposed to this act by your government.

If cultivation of GM eggplant (BT brinjal) is carried out on a large scale in Bangladesh, a country-of-origin for this important crop, it will not only have an influence on the food safety and food security, but may pollute other farms in your country. This could seriously influence your trading partners and countries such as Japan that import food. We would be forced to call on consumers in Japan to consider a boycott of farm products cultivated in Bangladesh.

Instead, we strongly urge you to cancel the approval of GM eggplant (BT brinjal) and prohibit the sale of all GM crops.

1) Cultivation of GM eggplant (BT brinjal) is not allowed in other countries. India and the Philippines are among the countries that prohibits GM eggplant (BT brinjal).

2) Many scientists have pointed out risks associated with the cultivation of GM crops, including adverse effects to the ecosystem and health problems for farmers. For consumers, the risks include allergic reactions and problems associated with unintended effects, such as the impact on the immune system. See for example the detailed guideline adopted by FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius in 2003 for the conduct of food safety assessment of GMO foods (CAC/GL 46-2003).

3) One approach to dealing with such varied and extensive risks involve using the precautionary principle, adopted in 1992 by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

4) We note that the introduction of GM crops have the potential to cause great damage on the biodiversity of your country, especially related to important agricultural crops used as food. We also regard this to go against the “Aichi Targets” which was adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity, and which Bangladesh is a member of.

5) We are certain that most farmers in your country perform sustainable agriculture and save their own seed. This will no longer be possible if you allow the introduction of genetically modified DNA that is patented and owned by large foreign corporations. Instead, farmers face an uncertain future of poverty, as they will be forced to make new purchases of GM seed each season, with a large amount of cash expenditure each year.

Thank you.

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Members of the Peoples' Coalition against GMOs in Bangladesh forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club to make awareness and resist against Bt. Brinjal, GM Potato and Golden Rice cultivation in Bangladesh. Dhaka, February 11, 2014. (By firoz ahmed from demotix.com)

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International Biodiversity Day Symposium In Tokyo, Japan

**International Biodiversity Day Symposium
Is Our Food and Biodiversity OK?
Saturday May 24, 2014**

YMCA Asia Youth Center
Suidobashi, Tokyo, Japan

13:00 Meeting hall open
13:30 Greetings
13:40 Message from South Korea
13:45 Status of GMOs in the Philippines (50 min)
14:35 Bt Brinjal: Bangladesh case (50 min)
15:25 Situation in Japan (20 min)
15:45 Break (15 min)
16:00 Panel discussion (50 min)
16:50 Final comments
17:00 End

<http://fa-net-japan.org/>
<http://gmo-iranai.lolipop.jp/index.php/>

Japanese Citizens' Network for Sustainable Food & Agriculture

Consumers Union of Japan

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Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan



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Japan Should Withdraw From TPP Negotiations Immediately

Food Safety Citizens' Watch is calling for the immediate withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement negotiations

December 26, 2013

The Japanese government held a cabinet minister meeting about TPP as the last round of negotiations ended in Singapore in December, and it was revealed that no agreement would be finalized in 2013. It was explained that countries will continue negotiating during 2014.

The TPP negotiations are carried out behind closed doors, and the content is not explained to the citizens in the countries involved. In addition, it is clear that the maintenance of tariffs on so-called sanctuary products (farm and marine products including rice) that the Japanese government has insisted on turns out to be difficult.

The United States continues to strongly insist on the profit for its own industries by including intellectual property rights protection in TPP. This involves copyright protection for pharmaceutical products and Hollywood movies. In addition, regarding food safety regulations that we are specifically concerned about, the United States appears to be demanding relaxation of such rules in other countries.

We see no positive result from Japan's participation in the TPP negotiations. We urge the government to listen to the resolution of the Liberal Democratic Party members in the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, that demanded Japan withdraw from the TPP negotiations promptly.

Kamiyama Michiko

Food Safety Citizens' Watch was established in April 2003 as a network of experts to monitor developments and make proposals to the government regarding food safety issues from the citizen's point of view.

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WikiLeaks Releases Secret Information About TPP Environment Chapter

January 29, 2014

WikiLeaks has done it again – made available important documents that governments and corporate interests have tried to keep secret from the general public. Until this new release, we had almost no idea what was going on within the secret Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations involving an extraordinarily diverse group of 12 large and small as well as rich and poor nations of East and Southeast Asia, Australasia, and North and South America. The twelve are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam, with the US driving the agenda. South Korea and Taiwan have also indicated that they may want to join. (...)

This time, we get a glimpse of the status of the Environment Chapter with important implications for the people and nature of the region.

Please read more at [Japan Focus: WikiLeaks and the Release of the Environment Report](#)

More details at the [WikiLeaks website](#)

“The Environment Chapter has long been sought by journalists and environmental groups. The released text dates from the Chief Negotiators’ summit in Salt Lake City, Utah, on 19-24 November 2013.

The Environment Chapter covers what the Parties propose to be their positions on: environmental issues, including climate change, biodiversity and fishing stocks; and trade and investment in ‘environmental’ goods and services. It also outlines how to resolve environmental disputes arising out of the treaty’s subsequent implementation. The draft Consolidated Text was prepared by the Chairs of the Environment Working Group, at the request of TPP Ministers at the Brunei round of the negotiations.

When compared against other TPP chapters, the Environment Chapter is noteworthy for its absence of mandated clauses or meaningful enforcement measures. The dispute settlement mechanisms it creates are cooperative instead of binding; there are no required penalties and no proposed criminal sanctions. With the exception of fisheries, trade in ‘environmental’ goods and the disputed inclusion of other multilateral agreements, the Chapter appears to function as a public relations exercise.”

By Martin J. Frid, CUJ

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Reform of the Power System

January 15, 2014

Consumers Union of Japan and concerned citizens and experts formed a committee in September 2013 to put forward proposals for a reform of Japan's energy system. This network took the opportunity to make a detailed submission to the government in January 2014. This is a brief summary of the Japanese text, which is available in full on the website of Consumers Union of Japan.

We must learn from the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear plant, and formulate a master plan which advances energy conversion. The government should listen to the opinion of citizens and reflect the public view when going forward with its plans.

A stable energy supply must be based on a new energy law which gives citizen the right to choose energy that is harmonious, sustainable and safe. Moreover, citizens should be given opportunity to participate in the policy making process. The new law should enable the promotion of affordable renewable energy, and phase out nuclear power and fossil fuels.

It is our opinion that the government should formulate a master plan that is independent of nuclear power. We have the following proposals for how the country can withdraw from nuclear power generation and the nuclear fuel cycle policy. It is particularly important to immediately stop the current nuclear fuel cycle policy.

Dependence on fossil fuel should be reduced and renewable energy should be promoted through numerical targets and a policy for increased efficiency. Energy saving measures should also be promoted further.

We want more discussion about the energy policy for example through public hearings so that the opinions of citizens can be heard. Moreover, we are of the opinion that not only the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the electricity companies should be in charge of electric power system reform, but also other agencies that better reflect the citizens, such as the Consumer Affairs Agency. A special committee representing the energy demand side should be set up that includes consumer representatives, experts on seismology and other related disciplines. It is also necessary to ensure the disclosure of each committee member's financial relationship to the electricity producers.

As a result of the Fukushima disaster, on the national level, the new energy policy needs to be a top priority. We need to build a new electric power system that allows for the decommissioning of all nuclear power plants.

70% of the population is now demanding a nuclear power-free society. People do not believe it is safe. We are concerned that the government is not taking the Fukushima disaster seriously, blaming it on the tsunami only, and taking no note of expert reports that have pointed out structural flaws, the threat of terrorism as well as seismological issues relevant to all nuclear plants in Japan.

Stop all new construction of nuclear power plants, including reprocessing plants and fast breeder reactors. Start decommissioning all nuclear power plants around the country. We do not accept any restarts of the nuclear power plants and note that it is unacceptable that there is still no proposal for the final disposal of nuclear waste.

The government's proposals for a reform of Japan's energy system is vague on renewable energy, only mentioning that the introduction of renewable energy will be accelerated as much as possible within three years from now. But there are no mid- or long-term numerical targets and no details about how this will happen. This is completely insufficient as a plan for encouraging the related industry. Photovoltaic generation and storage batteries for home owners are examples of areas where numerical targets are necessary. Increased energy efficiency and power saving measures also need to be carefully considered and encouraged.

Citizens Committee for Power System Reform

Koga Masako
Mashimo Toshiki
Oda Asako
Fukasawa Yoko

(END)

Japan Resources is published by Consumers Union of Japan (CUJ). CUJ was founded in April 1969 and was officially certified as a non-profit organization on May 1, 2006 by the new Japanese NPO legislation. We continue to be a non-political and financially independent organization (NGO). CUJ is funded by membership fees and donations. The main concern of CUJ and its members is to realize a world of liberty and equality, a world free of economic, social and legal discrimination, and to preserve a safe and healthy environment for our children's future.

CUJ pursues the following goals on behalf of consumers: (1) To secure for ourselves and our families safe and healthy lives, (2) to establish systems/laws to protect the rights of consumers, (3) to promote peace, social justice and economic fairness, (4) to support and empower consumers who care about the environment, and (5) to cooperate with foreign consumer groups/organizations.

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