

Citizens' Summit Subcommittee Meeting: 'Strong Civic Society'  
'Is There Another Chance to Host the G7 for Japan?'

April 2016

Adobono School Steering Committee

## 1. Purpose of this Position Paper

Adobono School Steering Committee (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'), the managing body of 'Adobono School' serving lectures for citizens to raise advocates since 2015, consists of the significant members of various NGOs and NPOs regarding to international cooperation, environmental or regional issues, and so on, in Kansai and Chubu areas.

As the Citizens' Ise-Shima Summit (hereinafter referred to as 'Citizens' Summit') is held at the same time as the G7 Ise-Shima Summit, the Committee poses the problem of 'participation and information disclosure' as to Japanese government's decision-making process about the G7 summit and other worldwide policies, as well as decision-making process of regional and national policies to host the summit. We make and announce this position paper for numerous participants in the Citizens' Summit to have productive discussions and proposals through the 'Strong Civic Society' session with us.

## 2. The Recognized Problems

The NGOs and NPOs participating in the Committee have advocated in various fields such as international cooperation, environment, local communities, and so on, and been involved in governmental discussions and forming policies at regional, national, and international levels. Today, while some advanced 'participation and information disclosure' examples can be seen in some municipalities and national ministries, cross-sectoral sharing experiences, like environment and international cooperation, regional and global issues, have not being sufficient. As advocacy skills are required to NGOs and NPOs in Japan, they are expected to have sense of responsibility as advocates and need to improve their advocacy skills through appropriate methods and opportunities.

Meanwhile, undoubtedly there is a trend against 'participation and information disclosure' in a part of Japanese society. We surely feel that the 'participation and information disclosure' in the governmental decision-making is gradually being oppressed under the present Abe regime. The activities of daily living, such as learning about politics and policies, free thinking, discussing, and proposing his/her ideas to the society, are being undermined; visible/invisible pressure is put on mass media, and the information about diplomacy, commerce, security, and so on, which should be open to the public, is kept secret.

This year, Japan hosts the G7 summit, the conference of seven nations 'sharing the value of

democracy.' It is doubtful that at present Japan is suitable to participate or host the summit as a democratic nation. We need to create a Japanese society that can contribute to local/global problem-solving by forming an 'elastically strong' civil society which enhances democracy in Japan, or this summit could be the last one held in this country.

### **3. Agendas**

- (1) How to share, implement, and hand down the experiences and lessons of advocacy and examples of 'participation and information disclosure' gained in various regional/global fields.
- (2) How to fight back the oppressing trend against the 'participation and information disclosure' in the politics, economy, and society in Japan. How to create a community where one can freely learn, think, discuss and propose his/her ideas.
- (3) How and what to suggest as opinions of regional communities against international politics, such as the G7 summit, which are proceeded irrelevantly to civic life.

### **4. Proposals**

#### **(1) To NGOs and NPOs**

- ① NGOs and NPOs do not exist to fill niches for governments or corporations, but to make suggestions for sustainable solutions for specific problems, standing at the viewpoints of people in/and regional communities. Remember that YOU ARE the advocates.
- ② Share and implement experiences and lessons of advocacy and the examples of 'participation and information disclosure' beyond the border of regional/global or different fields. Adobono School is willing to help you in spreading those know-hows nationwide.

#### **(2) To Residents in Japanese Society**

- ③ Support NGOs or NPOs that interest you as possible. Learn about their activities and objectives, and join the activities as possible. Share and discuss on them with people around you.

- ④ Beware of the information announced by mass media and internet. Try to read news articles reported by several media on the same matter. Do not hesitate to support the articles you like and remonstrate against the ones you don't.

**(3) To Governments of Japan and Other Member Nations of the G7**

- ⑤ We denounce the short process of the preparation for the G7 summit and the late announcement of its agendas. The regional communities and citizens do not merely participate in the summit as festive decorations. Start substantial conversation immediately with civil society so that it can be deeply involved in discussions on the agendas at the summit.
- ⑥ Although the enthusiasm of G7 leaders gathering to deal with global issues is appreciated, it is dubious if discussing only among the leaders of particular nations far apart from directly related people or areas is a proper way to solve the global problems. We strongly request you to continuously consider discussion process and exchanging ideas with the related people/areas for more appropriate problem-solution of global issues.

■ respectfully

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- Fair trade Samasama
- HUTAN Group
- Anti-war Network
- Civic Institute for Civil Society
- MIE NPO Network Center
- Association of Yokkaichi NPOs
- Universal Working Center
- Nagoya NGO Center
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