The Ninth World Water Forum, originally to be held around this time in Senegal, has been postponed to March, 2022 in consideration of COVID-19. Accordingly, the awarding ceremony of the Kyoto World Water Grand Prize is also postponed. Though there is still a year left until the 9th Forum, I would like to contribute this essay in hope of success for the big event.

The Japan Water Forum is currently involved in four Assistance for Grass-roots activities, including the Darvish Yu Water Fund and the JWF Fund. Thanks to support from individuals, companies and other organizations, we are working hard to improve access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, mainly in developing countries.
One of our initiatives, the Kyoto World Water Grand Prize, is the only international prize awarded exclusively to groups involved in grass-roots activities for resolving water problems in developing countries. The prize was created in 2003, when the 3rd World Water Forum was held in Japan’s Lake Biwa and Yodo River basin. The prize was first awarded at the 4th World Water Forum. Since then, it has been awarded at every subsequent Forum, held every three years.

The awarding ceremony for the 4th Kyoto World Water Grand Prize was included in the closing ceremony of the 7th World Water Forum in Daegu, Republic of Korea, in 2015. It was a pleasure for me to serve as presenter of the prize on behalf of the sponsors.

The recipient was a Nepalese organization called ENPHO. In cooperation with local communities and governmental organizations, it had been involved in improving public health by utilizing advanced, environmentally friendly technologies, such as disinfection of drinking water using the power of sunlight. In August, 2014, flooding took a heavy toll on Nepal, and just one week after the awarding ceremony, a major earthquake hit the country. I imagined that these disasters would be huge obstacles for ENPHO's activities, but, overcoming the hardships, they launched a new program to provide health education to school children, and to construct and maintain water supply facilities and toilets. In June 2016, they successfully completed this program. I was pleased to hear that their efforts had achieved significant results.

The 4th Kyoto World Water Grand Prize awarding ceremony.
From left, chair of board of directors of the JWF Dr. Takemura, recipient ENPHO representative, and myself.
After the awarding ceremony, we visited the Japan Pavilion. There was a hospitality area in the middle, and around it were exhibition booths and event spaces representing the following five themes: Water Cycle, Water and Sanitation, Water and Food, Water and Cities, Water and Disaster. It was a showcase of unique and innovative ideas. I was impressed by the strong feeling of unity. All of Japan, including the national government, civil organizations and private companies, was working together for the success of the Forum. Our company demonstrated how we can contribute to the safety and security of water through our technology of water-related analysis and measurement. It made me realize that there are still many challenges to overcome regarding water problems, and that we bear a responsibility to contribute to the solution of these challenges through our analysis and measurement technology.

In support of grass-roots activities, it is not sufficient only to give assistance grants for the construction of water supply facilities and toilets. We must also work together with people in local communities, provide education about water and sanitation, give guidance on maintenance of the facilities, and spread the knowledge we have acquired. In selecting the recipient of the Kyoto World Water Grand Prize, it is important for the recipient to be involved in unique and innovative activities and to provide a good model for other organizations. As the city of Kyoto is set to become a host again, I hope that the city’s unique spirit will be reflected in the process of selection for the prize. This spirit is found in the fact that Kyoto has been
ceaselessly changing and innovating while still maintaining its traditions throughout the history for more than 1,200 years. Time and time again, it has shown remarkable resilience in recovering from natural disasters and epidemics. I hope that awarding an organization energetically working for human welfare will serve as an incentive for promoting achievements of the SDGs. Finally, I look forward to a successful World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal next year when the COVID-19 pandemic has been overcome.

- Announcement from the Japan Water Forum

The Kyoto World Water Grand Prize was created to honor a distinguished organization involved in grass-roots activities related to solving water problems in developing countries. The Kyoto Prize will be awarded at the 9th World Water Forum, Dakar, Senegal. The winner of the Kyoto Prize will receive 2,000,000 JPY (Approximately 18,000 USD, depending on fluctuating exchange rates).

Deadline for submission is 11:59 p.m. on Friday, 30 April, 2021 (UTC 2:59 p.m). We look forward to receiving your applications!

▼ Please visit the following website for details▼

(Reported by Reiko Yoshii, Manager)

- 9th APWF Webinar will be held on 15th April 2021

  • Date and Time: 15th April 2021, 14:00-15:00 (Japan Time)
  • Speaker: Megan McLeod, CEO, Alliance for Water Stewardship Asia-Pacific (AWS
Asia-Pacific)
  ・ Topic: Engaging Industry In Sustainable Water Management Through Water Stewardship
  ・ Detail / Registration
  https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p5odEc9MQNaAJXtWqs_dxQ

(Reported by Yumiko Asayama, Manager)

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JWF staff members currently work from home (remote work) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections.
We wish you to stay safe and healthy during this difficult time.