

Research collaborations with the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements in dealing with population decline/aging society and urban renewal initiatives

KANEKO Hiroshi, Director

KIUCHI Nozomu (Ph.D (Engineering)), Head, Urban Planning Division

FUJIOKA Keitaro, Head, Urban Facilities Division

TAKEYA Shuichi (Ph.D (Engineering)), Head, Urban Disaster Mitigation Division

KATSUMATA Wataru (Ph.D (Engineering)), Head, Urban Development Division

Urban Planning Department

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1. Foreword

As democratic nations located adjacently to one another in the same East Asian region, Japan and South Korea share a relationship based on a sense of harmony and competition. However, in terms of urban planning, both countries face common issues like over-concentration in the metropolitan area, decreasing birthrates, aging and declining populations. Yet, there are some initiatives such as the integration of land-use planning systems, in which South Korea is believed to have taken the lead. On November 2012, the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, the nation's representative research institute in land-related fields, joined in an ongoing collaborative research agreement with NILIM.

2. Actions taken to date

Both bodies decided on focusing their collaborative research on urban-related fields, of which the following initiatives have been implemented.

- ① During the research exchange discussions, both counties disclosed and discussed conditions surrounding their respective initiatives towards city planning and urban renewal etc. (meetings held four times).
- ② Field work pertaining to city conditions and the relocation of central ministries and agencies was implemented with regards to South Korea's

government function relocation plan for the new administrative city of Sejong, which is still under construction.

- ③ Research information about issues/content regarding the implementation of specific research topics like land-aptitude evaluations was exchanged.



Photo 1: First research exchange conference (at NILIM)



Photo 2: Joint investigations into the urban renewal efforts of Gunsan, which utilized modernization-related assets

3. Initiatives regarding urban renewal support in provincial cities

Through this collaborative research work, a deeper understanding regarding the conditions and issues facing both countries' urban polices of recent years was attained, as well as a more human exchange, integral to the implementation of true collaborative research. Under the theme "Urban renewal support in provincial cities," we will be taking measures to further develop and deepen our joint research through the following activities starting this fiscal year.

- ① Joint investigations in case study initiatives for the urban renewal of provincial cities where population decline, aging societies and the impoverishment of city centers progress (Japan: Fukui, Toyama, South Korea: Jeonju, Gunsan).
- ② Provide a lecture and exchange views with lecturers from each country at an international seminar held by the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements on the effects that our country's fluctuating population structure has had on urban space, and future initiatives for the formation of centralized cities in the face of further declining populations.

Through these activities, the common points (participation by local management organizations in planning support etc.) and the differences (suburban development and maintenance situations etc.)



between the two countries in terms of the declining populations/aging society issue

Photo 3: Lecture regarding population decline and spatial planning at the international seminar

and urban renewal initiatives, is becoming more distinct. In the future, we would like to focus our studies on these very points.