

# **RSOG & INTAN SABAH**

## **A Joint Dinner Talk on “Urban Area Management”**

with

**Professor Hiro Ichikawa**

**When** : 29 November 2015  
**Where** : Hyatt Regency Kinabalu  
**Speakers** : Professor Hiro Ichikawa

### **About the Seminar**

Urban areas can be conveniently referred to as cities, towns, and suburbs. National Geographic defines urban areas as the region surrounding a city. By and large, urban areas are very developed with density of human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges and railways, where most of its inhabitants are involved in non-agricultural jobs. It is estimated that only 746 million people lived in urban areas throughout the world in 1950 as compared to 3.9 billion today. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs predicted the urban population would grow to 6.4 billion by 2050. Social exclusion, inadequate social amenities and housing, unemployment, crime, high cost of living, and illegal foreign workers are always being associated with rapid urban areas expansion. This dinner talk aims to learn from Tokyo, the world’s most populous urban (35 million people) area as far as urban management experience is concerned.

### **Summary**

In Tokyo is one of the 47 prefectures in Japan. It is the most populous metropolitan area in the world which stretches more than 80km north, south, east, and west with about 38 million population – with more people than countries like Canada. Tokyo is governed as a "metropolitan prefecture" – combination of both a city and a prefecture element.

Tokyo was behind many major European cities in terms of modernisation until the late 19th century. The devastation following World War II was turned into an opportunity to remake Tokyo. Hideaki Ishikawa, the then head of Tokyo Prefecture’s City Planning

Bureau envisioned of an ideal city like English “garden city” surrounded by farmland and protected from unbridled expansion with pleasure for walking around. Unfortunately reality defeated Ishikawa’s ideal – job opportunities attracted millions of people to come to Tokyo. Land readjustment failed to progress due to financial problems and opposition from the landowners. Capital Region Development Plan was issued in 1958 to save Tokyo from overcrowding – spacious green belts to separate the metropolis from the smaller cities. As the housing shortage became acute, such plan did not go through, and ultimately Tokyo never managed to follow a Western-style city plan. Whilst policy ideals are highly regarded, when it comes to implementation, practical requirements take priority. In short, centralisation has won out over decentralisation.

In all fairness to Tokyo, despite its overconcentration, it still continues to function without severe problems. There are no other cities in the developed world comparable to Tokyo in this respect. How did Tokyo do it? It is a combination of responsive policy to urban problems, cultivating public awareness, the perseverance character of the Japanese people, and high level of technology as an enabler.

## **About the Programme**

Professor Hiroo Ichikawa is currently Dean at the Professional Graduate School of Governance Studies, Meiji University, and Tokyo, Japan. He is also Executive Director, Mori Memorial Foundation and President at the Meiji University Research Centre for Crisis and Contingency Management. He is cross-appointed as an Adjunct Professor at the School of Science and Engineering, Waseda University, Japan. He majors in urban policy, urban and regional planning, crisis management and policy for foreign aids. A Japanese first-class registered architect, Professor Ichikawa is also a member of steering committee and a chairman of working committee for the Global Power City Index and author of several major books describing a variety of issues related to Tokyo and mega-city regions.

The Joint Dinner Talk is predominantly delivered in the form of video presentations. This summary is prepared with the assistance of the write-up published by Japan International Cooperation Agency entitled Keys to Japan 7 "Urban Governance: Learning from Tokyo".

## **Contact**

To get more information on this event, you can contact us via email at [programmes@rsog.com.my](mailto:programmes@rsog.com.my)