

Preface

This bulletin report, published in the *IDE Joint Research Program Series*, is a collection of research papers by the members of a joint research project, “A Social Experiment in Community Roundtable Meetings for Water Environment Improvement in the Tai Lake Basin,” initiated by the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE), and the Center for Environmental Management and Policy in the School of the Environment, Nanjing University (CEMP), in the fiscal year of 2008.

Water environment improvement is an urgent task necessitated by the rapid economic growth in China. Tai Lake (pronounced “tai-hu” in Chinese), located in the Yangtze Delta region where miraculous economic growth has occurred, is one of the heavily polluted lakes in China, and although numerous measures for conservation of its water have been implemented for many years, they have been proved not effective enough. A new initiative to hold community environmental roundtable meetings in Jiangsu Province, thereby incorporating public participation, is considered to be one of the more effective potential measures to complement regulatory enforcement and market-oriented measures in environmental policy. This research project by IDE and CEMP aims to develop a new model of community roundtable meetings for water environment improvement in the Tai Lake basin.

These papers are based on a sequence of joint research activities conducted in both China and Japan. On June 22, 2008, CEMP and IDE held a workshop at CEMP in Nanjing to present and discuss comparative environmental policies for watershed management in China and Japan as well as to discuss how to implement community roundtable meetings in the Tai Lake basin. On December 3, 2008, CEMP assisted the Yixing Economic Development Zone and local Environment Protection Bureau in organizing its first community roundtable meeting on water pollution issues in one of the rivers running through the zone into Tai Lake. On December 19, IDE invited two members from CEMP to an international workshop at JETRO in Tokyo to present and discuss public participation in environmental policy and practices of community roundtable meetings in China, including the first meeting in Yixing. On January 8, 2008, a follow-up roundtable meeting was held in Yixing to review the first trial in December and discuss the next step. Before and after the workshops in Nanjing and Tokyo, some members of the study group engaged in field trips to better understand water

environment issues on site.

I would like to thank not only all the members of our study group for their tremendous contributions and efforts, but also many people who provided beneficial input, suggestions, and assistance during our sequence of research activities in China and Japan.

Kenji Otsuka
March 2009