

Message from Midori Shimomura, Secretary General

In 2013, we keep making our best efforts to reform administration of Sumida city. In this issue, we will introduce Ms. Noemi Inoue's Q&A activities at the City Council 3rd General Assembly (Sep, 2012) and Special Audit Committee (Oct. 25 to Nov. 7). Hope this paper would facilitate more understanding about our endeavors.

Message from Noemi Inoue, Sumida City Council Woman

At the above-mentioned general assembly, I conducted questions and propositions to Mayor Mr. Yamazaki about an internationalization of the City, promotion of Ryogoku area, the development of child friendly environments, policy measures against school bullying and traffic safety at the school zone. Regarding bullying and traffic accidents issues, I have been raising them to the council and will keep doing furthermore to protect lives of children. At the Special Audit Committee meetings, I have asked about administrative reforms and the effective usage of tax spending, considering the City's serious financial situation. As for details, please read following sections.



Debt Issue of Sumida City

Sumida's financial condition is the second worst among the Tokyo 23 wards. While FY 2012 general accounting budget is about 100 billion yen (1 billion USD), the balance of the debt is 31.2 billion yen (312 million USD). The council should manage the city without increasing debt anymore. I will continue requesting firm financial reform.

● Special Audit Committee (Oct. 26, 2012)

Inoue's Q The balance of Sumida's debt is definitely a big concern among residents. Please disclose the total amount? Moreover, 5.2 billion yen of special city bond was issued in FY2011, whereas redemption was only 3.6 billion. Thus, balance is even increasing. When is the prospective goal for paying up?

Answer The total debt balance was 512 billion yen (about 512 million USD) at the end of FY2011. During this fiscal period, new bond issuance has surpassed redemption to develop social capitals such as new construction or renovation of school building and bicycle parking area. We intend to use special city bond for financing public facility maintenance and upgrading while considering debt ratio.



Born on December 5, 1961 in Bolivia, South America. After graduating from University, worked as an economist for the Central Bank of Bolivia and the United Nation's office. Married to Mr.Kazuo Inoue former member of the House of Representatives in Japan. Moved to Japan 17 years ago. In 2009, established an NGO "Japan-Latin America Friendship Association" in Sumida ward to promote an exchange between Latin American nations and Japan. Granted Japanese nationality in 2010. In April 2011, elected as a member of the Sumida City Assembly for the first term. Vice Secretary General of Sumida Assembly League of International Friendship.

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Committee

- > Civil and Education Committee
- > New Tower and Tourism Promotion Committee

My Agenda

- > Sumida - Life safe region
- > Sumida - Nursing Future
- > Sumida - Welfare region
- > Sumida - International Tourism region

Making Sumida a Child Friendly City

I want to create a peaceful environment where children can comfortably grow up. In order to realize this, I made a speech about the importance of protecting their rights, prioritizing related policies, and strengthening childcare support.

● Q&As at the 3rd General Assembly (Sep. 12, 2012)

Inoue's Q This summer, I visited my hometown La Pas, Bolivia. Meeting with mayor and city council members gave me chances to introduce Sumida and discuss possibility of future interactions. This news was coverage by local TV stations and newspapers. Then, a UNICEF La Paz Representative happened to know about me and requested Sumida to participate in their worldwide program "Campaign for Child Friendly Cities", based on the Convention on the Rights of Child. This aims at protecting child's human rights with no discrimination, securing health and education, and prioritizing children-oriented policies. What do you think about joining this UNICEF campaign.

Mayor's A Sumida city has already made a plan on promotion of human rights, putting special emphasis on child's rights issue, and started promoting child friendly city.

● Special Audit Committee (Oct. 30, 2012)

Inoue's Q "Sumida Salon for children" in Kamezawa is quite convenient for mothers nurturing their children, because they can ask babysitting, develop personal network with other mothers and relieve mental stress. Running cost is limited as it is run by an NPO. What do you think about developing such a useful facility more and more?

Answer There is no plan for new construction as there are many similar facilities.

Determined Action Against Bullying Requires

Bullying is one of the worst social problems. I made questions for creating school environment without bullying at the plenary assembly. Regrettably, current actions by the Sumida Educational Committee shows quite limited result. This year's investigation has found 36 actual cases in primary school and junior high and additional 138 suspicion cases. I definitely insist that city educational committee should tackle this with serious responsibility. Even the present committee system should be reconsidered.

● Q&As at the 3rd General Assembly (Sep. 12, 2012)

Inoue's Q Now we all know that city has found so many school bullying cases. This is extremely serious problem. Our residents are worried about sending their sons and daughters to the school. This is also Japan's nationwide concern. Many people are casting doubts about the Educational Committee, which is not functioning properly.

Committee's A We provide instructions to committee of school principal, deputy principals, and councillors, respectively. Most of suspicions are already solved.

● Special Audit Committee (Nov. 6, 2012)

Inoue's Q Child education is highly crucial for all residents. Even some claim that the Education Committee should be abolished. What do you think about this view?

Mayor's A There is a discussion at the national parliament. I am paying attention to its process.



With Mr. Luis Revilla, Mayor of La Paz

Tourist Destination and Development of Ryogoku

Ryogoku is historic area conserving our tradition, class and taste. I want to rejuvenate it as a world-class tourist destination. Coexistence of cutting-edge Sky Tree and old national Sumo Coliseum, Chanko restaurants and Edo history museum. There are so many sightseeing spots attractive for foreigners. I devote myself into making Ryogoku a well-known spot all around the world.

● Q&As at the 3rd General Assembly (Sep. 12, 2012)

Inoue's Q I suggest a promotions centering "SUMO" for attracting tourists to Ryogoku. Such kind of symbolic image is essential. Presently, there are not many visitors other than Grand Tournament seasons. "SUMO" and "Chanko Nabe" can be a powerful vehicle to invite more visitors and make Ryogoku world class destination.

Mayor's A Now the city administration is developing a grand design of "Ryogoku promotion". Sumo is as important as waterfront and Edo culture. The ombination of SUMO and our local delicacy "Chanko Nabe" would be effective tool to promote our city, both domestically and internationally.



Annual Festival in Sumida City

Necessity of Bicycle Exclusive Lane

● Q&As at the 3rd General Assembly (Sep. 12, 2012)

Inoue's Q The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has decided a legislation about bicycle exclusive lane. Whereas it is difficult to make exclusive roads for bikes, bike lanes are not a big challenge as it only requires painting. Narrower automobile lane would make traffic slow down. This is even beneficial for preventing traffic accidents.

Mayor's A I agree with your ideas. In the meantime, though, ordinary traffic may be affected, too. Thorough examination must be required.