

## Preface

EROPA (The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration) was founded in December 1960 as an international non-governmental organization. Its major objective has been to promote economic and social developments of various countries in the Asia and Pacific region. The central secretariat is located in Manila. It operates three regional centers: New Delhi, Seoul and Tokyo. These centers function as either a training ground or a research hub for the EROPA members.

In February, 2012, EROPA held the 23rd General Assembly and the 57th Executive Council Meeting in Thailand. Originally scheduled in October, 2011, the Assembly/Conference was postponed due to the unprecedented flooding in Bangkok. More than 300 state, group and individual members of this international organization attended the conference and discussed many social and political issues under the main theme, "Challenges, Opportunities and Innovations in Public Administration in the Next Decade" and the sub-themes, "Fiscal Retrenchment: Challenges, Opportunities, and Innovation in Public Administration," "The Role of the State in Managing New Challenges: Opportunities and Innovations" and "Innovations in Public Service Delivery."

Japan is one of the original members of EROPA. Ever since its foundation, the country has been involved in many activities of the organization. Local Autonomy College of Japan is the research and training institution of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. This college houses the EROPA Local Government Center, and the center provides training courses, research activities, and the publications of different materials on local government and governance for the member countries.

An important segment of EROPA Local Government Center in Tokyo is publication of the *Comparative Public Administration* series. Every three years, the center has made available an important volume dealing with various administrative issues of importance. To date, *Comparative Public Administration* has dealt with such issues as democracy, development, civil society and fiscal issues, primarily in the context of local government and governance. The volumes have been well received and contributed much to solving the local problems.

The current eleventh volume focuses on "Integrated Human Capacity Building in the age of Decentralization." As a result of the global trend towards decentralization, a growing number of countries have begun to delegate social service delivery functions to local units of governments. Moreover, many countries now face domestic demand to build a new administrative system that enables local residents to actively participate in the decision making process. However, decentralization efforts tend to generate the lack of human resources and capacity buildings. Well educated human resources tend to be centered in either the private sector or the national

government especially in developing regions. Many local areas would not have enough qualified personnel to deal with a large score of nagging issues inextricable from decentralization. Developing a horde of trained personnel to be involved in local government management and practice has thus become a critical issue in various countries. It is for this reason that the current volume has decided to focus on the issue of human capacity building.

A total of eight essays are included in this volume. Each author has elaborated on the human capacity building from his/her respective country's unique perspectives. The EROPA Local Government Center as well as Local Autonomy College hopes the latest publication will help to improve our understanding of immense problems that local governments in the region have currently been facing. As the representative of the two organizations, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those contributors for their deep insights and analyses, in addition to their dedicated works to this volume.

In closing, I would like to make two further notes of appreciation. This publication is made possible by the financial support from the General Center for Local Autonomy (Jichi Sogo Center). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Center. Likewise, I would also like to express special thanks to the support of Editor-in-Chief Akira Nakamura, Professor Emeritus of Meiji University, and to the efforts of Associate Editor Osamu Koike, Professor of Yokohama National University, and to Editorial Assistant Masao Kikuchi, Associate Professor of Meiji University. Also much gratitude goes out to Mr Akio Kamiko, Dean of the College of Policy Science, Ritsumeikan University for his valuable reviews and comments at the editorial meetings. Their support in editing the volume has enriched the quality immensely.

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