

## Preface

The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) is an international organization that aims to promote and develop the public administration to help accelerate economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan is a founding member of the organization, which was established in December 1960. The organization has its Secretariat in Manila, and four technical centers: the Development Management Center (Seoul), the Training Center (New Delhi), the Local Government Center (Tokyo) and the E-Government Research Center (Beijing). The Local Government Center is located in Local Autonomy College of Japan.

The Local Government Center receives trainees from member countries to give high-level international trainings. In addition, studies on local governments of the member countries are carried out. The Center also makes publications. One such publication, a project entitled "Comparative Studies of Public Administration", is a collection of papers on comparative studies of local administrations by researchers of the member countries. This project started out based on the determination by the EROPA Executive Council Meeting in 1981. The Comparative Study has been published once every two or three years since 1984. A total of 11 collections have been published so far, focusing on important administrative issues such as human resource development, administrative reform, coproduction of public services and financial retrenchment. They are highly regarded and considered to contribute to helping solve local government issues the member countries are facing.

We have now published Volume 12 under the title "Enhancing the quality of local governance: Institutionalization, Capacity Building and Inter-Governmental Relationships". Decentralization has been advancing throughout the world. Governments have transferred their administrative power to local governments in many countries; therefore, strengthening the quality of local governance has become an important issue. This factor led us to focus on the main theme for Volume 12. Dr. Hellmut Wollmann (Professor Emeritus, Humboldt University) wrote the prefatory note regarding the entire main theme. He is one of the world's experts on local autonomy. Many fields are instrumental in strengthening the quality of local governance, but this volume focuses on three sub-themes: institutionalization, capacity building and inter-governmental relationships. Eight distinguished researchers mainly from the member countries wrote essays on the sub-themes. They analyzed the current situations, challenges and initiatives of their own governments through their diverse perspectives and deep insights.

I hope that this volume will be used to help develop local governance in various countries. I also wish local entities in Japan to utilize this volume as a reference to enhance international contributions such as study tours from overseas. In addition, I expect that this book will be helpful to Japanese researchers for studying other

countries' administrations and teaching at universities.

Lastly, I would like to thank Prof. em. Dr. Wollmann, who wrote the prefatory note, and all the researchers who wrote the essays for the volume. Upon publication of Volume 12, we received a lot of support and cooperation from Dr. Akira Nakamura (Professor Emeritus, Meiji University), the chief of the editorial board; Dr. Koichiro Agata (Professor, Waseda University), a member of editorial board; Prof. Akio Kamiko (Vice-President, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University); Dr. Osamu Koike (Professor, Yokohama National University); and Dr. Masao Kikuchi (Associate Professor, Meiji University). This excellent collection of works owes itself to the efforts of Chief Editor Nakamura and all the editorial members. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to them all. Finally, I would like to thank the Japan Center for Local Autonomy (Jichi Sogo Center) for their generous financial support.

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