Panel 3.5: Assessing and Addressing Environmental Impacts Across the Region

Environmental Impact Assessment System in Japan and Okinawa

Development of land use is usually accompanied by various types of environmental issues. Environmental impact assessment is a keyword of protection and improvement of environment against development. The characteristics and problems of present situations of the environmental impact assessment system in Japan are illustrated to examine the expected functions of the system. Both the legal processes and the technical aspects of the assessment system are examined from the viewpoints of developers, administrators and residents or ordinary people. Okinawa is a southernmost archipelagic area in Japan that has a very unique history, culture and nature, and has many military bases in a limited land area. The environmental impact assessment system has a very important role when wide areas that are concerned with military bases are developed. Moreover, it is sometimes misunderstood and expected too much to control military bases. The principal policy and the exact functions of the environmental impact assessment should be disseminated and understood more, and the system should be utilized for a better environment in the future.