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Request about the World Expo 2025

Mr. Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales

We appreciate your great contributions to holding the World Expo in order to cultivate friendship and peace.

The World Expo 2025 is to be held in Osaka, Japan, and Yumeshima Island is supposed to be its ground.

But Yumeshima Island is not only a hot spot of biodiversity, but also a place where we have many serious problems to be examined such as vulnerabilities against disasters, fears of pollutions, management of waste disposal and so on. The core of a town planning of Yumeshima is a casino and IR, and therefore it is said that pumping tax money into infrastructure development around it may be the profit-sharing to a casino company in the name of the World Expo. Furthermore, the World Expo is mocked as "Casino EXPO" by many citizens, and thus if the World Expo 2025 is held at Yumeshima, the purpose of it, "to contribute toward achievement of SDGs" will become in name only.

We are deeply concerned that the World Expo, whose main aim is to educate the public, is about to be held at Yumeshima together with a casino. We now want to bring up some serious problems and propose to you that a site of the World Expo 2025 should be changed.

<Anxiety about disasters>

The Bid Dossier Japanese government submitted to BIE has only one page's document about "Earthquake Preparedness" and "Wind and Water Disaster Preparedness". It only says that "a tsunami would not reach the ground of Yumeshima", "Yumeshima Island's ground is difficult to liquefy", "the buildings of the Expo, bridges and tunnels related to the Expo are designed and constructed so that visitors can be secured at the time of the above earthquake", and "Yumeshima itself is located on ground higher than the tide line. Therefore, rainwater flows down naturally into the ocean."

It is believed that there is a 70~80% probability that a megathrust earthquake in the

Nankai Trough of magnitude 9.1 will occur within the next 30 years. It is also said that Yumeshima, an artificial island, has a high risk of soil liquefaction and flood by a tsunami. Many experts, such as “National Institute for Environmental Studies – Center for Material Cycles and Waste Management Research” and so on, have pointed out a high risk that Yumeshima goes under water by a tsunami.

A tsunami means high-speed flow of water. According to Osaka Prefectural Government, a tsunami's speed reaches 5.5m/sec near Yumeshima, and its wavelength is about 100km. When it strikes breakwaters, even a 4m tsunami can leak over a 6m bank. In the Great East Japan Earthquake, the level of the runup on land by a tsunami was about two to four times as high as a tsunami's water level.

After the Great 1995 Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the 3m settlement of sea walls occurred because of liquefactions brought about by the earthquake. However, settlement of sea walls is not seriously taken into account in the Osaka Prefectural Government's assumption of a megathrust earthquake in the Nankai Trough. We have not received a report that sea walls in Yumeshima Island are under construction in order to be raised.

And according to the liquefaction map made by Osaka Prefectural Government, the sea-side district including Sakishima, Maishima and Yumeshima islands will widely liquefy. This district is expected to suffer from not only liquefaction and flood but also fire and dangerous drifts. So, there is high possibility that no help from outside Yumeshima Island can be expected because of traffic blocks.

We are concerned about heavy rains and windstorms as typhoons' influence. A typhoon in 2018 blew off a great many of empty containers piled up at the container yard in Yumeshima Island.

<Anxiety about pollutions>

About ten million tons of burned ash has been buried for the last 28 years in Yumeshima, and it is still the final disposal site of Osaka City. Soils of Yumeshima include dangerous materials in which there are fears of pollutions of dioxin and PCB. There are even some restricted access areas and effluent limitation areas in the planned site of the World Expo.

<loss of biodiversity>

Yumeshima Island is one of the biodiversity hotspots in Osaka Red List 2014 as well as Nankou-yachouen, Wild Bird Garden of the South Port, in Sakishima Island, and also is designated as an A rank area, where many kinds of birds face extinction. In this area, little tern, designated as one of Endangered species category 1 (CR+EN), and little ringed plover, also designated as one of Near-Threatened species (NT) in Osaka Red List 2014, are likely to build nests, and we can see a lot of kinds of birds in the Red List of Osaka Prefectural Government or the Ministry of the Environment, such as sheldrake, Eastern

marsh harrier, and peregrine falcon. Furthermore, Yumeshima Island is an important feeding ground, resting-place and stopping-point of a lot of migratory birds.

<imperfect access>

There is not enough examination about access between the center of Osaka City and Yumeshima. We have only two routes to Yumeshima, a tunnel and a bridge. Now Yumeshima container yards play a central role in the distribution network of Kansai region. Every time a container ship touches land, heavy traffic jam occurs at both a tunnel and a bridge because of many trucks carrying containers. So, we don't think that there is enough room for sightseeing as well as distribution.

<difficulty in achieving SDGs>

The process of determining a site for the World Expo was lacking in "Partnership", one of five "P" in SDGs. Only the Governor of Osaka Prefecture and the Mayor of Osaka City suddenly decided the site without a decision of Osaka City council. In Public Comments on "A Plan of Developing Yumeshima", people with opinions against this plan or with careful opinions got an absolute majority.

The core of a town planning of Yumeshima is a casino and IR. We believe that a casino and IR is against achievement of "No one will be left behind" and against many parts of aims of SDGs. If a site of the World Expo is located in Yumeshima Island, it will be difficult to achieve SDGs.

<political instability of Osaka City>

The Governor of Osaka Prefecture and the Mayor of Osaka City, who both have promoted the World Expo, insist on abolishing Osaka City. When this plan is accomplished in the near future, it is not clear at all who pays enormous construction funds of the World Expo and infrastructure development. We are seriously concerned that future generations in Osaka will have too much financial burden, which may be the source of trouble in the future, by the World Expo.

<possibility of another site>

Originally there were six proposed sites for the World Expo 2025. We think it clear that Yumeshima is not the most suitable site in them and some of other sites are more suitable than Yumeshima. For example, at Tsurumi Green Park, one of the proposed sites, was held "The International Garden and Greenery Exposition, Osaka, Japan, 1990". This exposition's visitors numbered over 23 million, the most in all Special Expositions. Tsurumi Green Park is still one of sites with past performance.

According to our position, we have asked Osaka Prefectural Government and Osaka City Office to re-consider the decision that Yumeshima should be the site for the World

Expo. But our proposal has not been accepted. We now make a cordial request to you, BIE, that you should make a proper action for defending the dignity of the World Expo.

Sincerely,

Sakurada Teruo
Joint Representative
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about Changing Town-planning of Yumeshima Island)
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