

Abstract

This research, “The Role of Civil Society in Japan’s Environmental Diplomacy”, aims to study the factors that promote Japan’s more active role in adopting environmental diplomacy since the late 1990s. It also aims to study the style, approach and role of Japanese civil society in Japan’s environmental diplomacy.

It is a documentary research emphasizing descriptive analysis. It is based on primary data derived from speeches and statements made by country’s leaders and related agencies. The secondary sources include books and academic articles from both Thai and foreign journals. Other data is gathered from interviews by some representatives of the Japanese public sector and civil society. The data obtained is then analyzed under the framework “Liberal Adaptive State”.

The result of this research shows that there are some internal factors that promote Japan’s more active role in adopting environmental diplomacy, including the need to establish national prestige and the active role of civil society. Since the early 1990s, Japanese civil society has played a more active role in environmental issues. For instance, Japanese civil society has attended several international conferences, has launched more activities in developing countries, and has participated in the government’s environmental policy, affecting the process through various channels. For example, they have submitted proposals on the environment for the consideration of the government; they have attended several meetings whereby they have exchanged ideas and experiences with representatives of the public sector; and they have collaborated with the public sector in operating certain environmental activities in foreign countries. They have also participated in assessing the performance of government agencies. All of these active roles confirm the pluralist nature of the Japanese political system, which has led to more liberalism in the country’s foreign policy and has resulted in adopting more active environmental diplomacy since the late 1990s. This diplomacy has been translated into various styles and approaches, for instance, the expansion of ODA projects in the field of the environment in developing countries; transfer of environmental

technology; attendance at international conferences; proposals of various measures on environmental issues; and assistance with the establishment of international environmental organizations as well as cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels.