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Responsible Consumption & Production (SDG 12)

Japan

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**Introduction**

In this report, I will be writing about the Responsible Consumption & Production (Sustainable development Growth 12) in Japan. Japan, a country with 377,915 km land size (Size of Japan compared to California, n.d.) and estimated of 126 million population (Japan Population, n.d.), product estimated 6.12 million tons of food waste annually (The Japan Times, 2020) and is the fifth-biggest carbon emitter (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2020) which product estimated 1.29 billion CO2 gas to product 1060 billion kWh of electricity annually as of 2017 (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, 2018). If those numbers continue to rise, japan will face many problems. Therefore, the vision of Responsible Consumption & Production is important to Japan.

This vision aims to reduce environmental damage due to economic growth, increasing efficiency of resources, and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle to everyone by transiting toward low-carbon and green economies (Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, n.d.).

**Importance**

As of 2015, Japan has an estimated of 20 million cubic meters of landfill left for general waste which expected to be filled up by 2030 (Nippon, 2018), but the number of wastes produced annually as of 2010 did not drop especially food waste (Statista Research Department, 2019). The number of food waste has been increasing even when the population of Japan is decreasing yearly (Japan Population, n.d.). This has become a big problem for Japan as over 6 million tons of still-edible food is thrown away annually (The Japan Times, 2020), which cost more than 101 billion dollar which can be used to help the low-income family in Japan.

Japan, the fifth-biggest carbon emitter in the world (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2020), also want to be a part of stopping climate change (Japan | Climate Action Tracker, 2019), and the biggest cause of high carbon emission is power. 47.7% of carbon product in Japan (Tanishita, 2014) is caused by the production of power through burning of fossil fuels which product 492 million tonnes of CO2 (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, 2018). When this is too much CO2 is in the atmosphere, it can cause health problems to residents like headaches, increase in temperature due to climate change and many more (Environmental Defense Fund, n.d.).

Therefore, achieving Responsible Consumption & Production is important to japan. With responsible buying habit, and company with better production pattern, there will be lesser waste products being burn (lesser CO2) and dispose to the landfill. Production factory and farms will also emit lesser CO2 for product that is not needed.

**Challenges**

**Food waste**

Japanese take great pride in the quality and purity of their food. Therefore, there are many cultural practices that may need to be changed to reduce food waste. One practice is the one-third rule for food delivery (Chu, 2018). All processed foods must reach the retailer in one-third or shorter time of the production to the expiry date stated on the product, or else the food will be return to the manufacturer, than get disposed. This is because stores believe that customers tend to prioritize products freshness when picking product (HORIUCHI, 2019). This also resulted in store throwing food that is still edible.

**Save energy**

The transition from using fossil fuels for energy to a less wasteful and carbon-free energy source will cost a lot of money. For example, the Feed-In Tariff (FIT) policy (About Japan’s Feed-In Tariff (FIT), n.d.) which provide cost reduction for innovation and investment in renewable energy. The cost is very high, for each renewable energy project, it will need billions of dollars of investment and government subsidies for those project progress (Sheldrick & Tsukimori, 2018).

**INITIATIVES**

There are many initiatives done in Japan to promote the vision. One of them is a campaign to promote bringing personal containers to take home leftovers and raise awareness of food waste (Umeda, 2019). The effectiveness is slowly happening, but because many restaurants do not allow takeaway of leftovers using individual containers or do not provide “doggy bag” as restaurant feel there is a risk of food poisoning, which could damage their business reputation (Saito, 2010). Therefore, this may take some time for all restaurants to accepting this campaign.

Japan also release law like Food Recycling Act (Japan Government) which promote company in the food industries to reducing and recycling food wastes into fertilizer and feed and the Act on Promoting Food Loss Reduction (Japan Government), where company will help to encourage reduction of food waste through awareness and acting. For example, Seven-Eleven, they will be giving 5% discount and reward point for product that is 1-2 week from the expiry date (HIRASHIMA & TAKAYUKI , 2019). But those laws start acting from October 2019 (Umeda, 2019), so we still do not know its effectiveness.

For energy, japan have introduce the FIT policy which was mentation above. Renewable energy reduce waste, but the cost is too high. With the current new installed solar farm, it has a capacity of 250GW (Sheldrick & Tsukimori, 2018). But according to data release by Japan Government, there is only an increase of 6% for renewable energy generation (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, 2018). Therefore, it is not effective.

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