

# **Message from Environmental Businesswomen**

(from the Third Round Meetings)

## **Environmental Businesses and Town Development Created by Women to Promote a Sustainable Society**

(Report from the Third Round of Environmental Businesswomen Meetings)

### **1. Building a Sustainable Society and Environment-Related Businesses**

A virtuous cycle of the environment and the economy is essential in order to create a sustainable society. Such a virtuous cycle would present a positive feedback situation whereby improving the environment would boost the economy and economic invigoration would lead to an improved environmental situation.

In June 2007 the cabinet decided on a Strategy for an Environmental Nation in the 21st Century. In this strategy, Japan's rich human resources in the field of environmental protection are positioned as one of the country's strengths. In particular, high expectations exist for women who will approach severe, real problems with new approaches outside of existing paradigms, and attack problems with both creativity and energy. Such women will likely become the driving force behind efforts to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and bring a low-carbon, sustainable society into reality.

With the Kyoto Protocol's commitment period having started in April 2008, there is no time to delay in combating the issue of global warming. Environment-related businesses and urban development with a focus on environmental protection will play important roles in the effort to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets and build a sustainable society over the middle- to long-term horizon. In this way, businesswomen active in environmental-related fields are expected to act as frontrunners in creating a sustainable society.

### **2. Activities by Environmental Businesswomen**

[Participants' comments listed in Japanese alphabetical order]

➤ I work on energy conservation from the perspective of ordinary people, and am engaged in activities focused on energy/environmental surveys and environmental education. (Miyuki Oba)

➤ I incorporate the LOHAS philosophy, which is oriented towards the health of people, communities and the earth, into business and rejuvenating local communities. Also, I will continue to promote a new lifestyle that places importance on agriculture through carbon offsets. (Junko Owada)

➤ I think it is necessary to incorporate the environment into social systems. Based on this philosophy, I research companies' environmental and CSR activities, and am involved in activities to improve the environment by making use of the impact of finance on society. (Mariko Kawaguchi)

➤ Every day I deliver the message that a person's attractiveness is holistic, specifically being the harmony between one's appearance, body, and spirit. I would

like to spread the concept of beauty as living in a way in which one takes care of his/her own environment. (Beniko Kishi)

➤ Using my experience as a journalist, I launched *Alterna*, a business magazine focused on the environment, social contribution, and ambition. In addition to the environment and health, the magazine provides information about CSR and other topics. (Maki Kimura)

➤ I work on detailed strategies for encouraging many people to take small steps rather than a few people trying to take huge steps. My aim is for more people in the ward to take some sort of concrete action, even if it is something small, to tackle environmental problems. I am also aiming to resolve problems that can only be worked on by government, such as large subsidies for solar power generation system installation expenses as well as increasing the coverage ratio of solar power generation systems. (Yayoi Kondo)

➤ I manage the ISO14001 and ISO9001 program and coordinate collaboration between the union and union members. (Masumi Saito)

➤ Through *Tsuhan Seikatsu*, a unique magazine for mail-order shopping with articles on environmental and social issues, I propose new ways of shopping and living in the era of global warming. As a retailer and part of the media, my mission is to communicate to both producers and users the need to consume in a manner that is as sustainable as possible. (Noriko Takemoto)

➤ My organization connects consumers with business and provides support in order to prevent problems. I talk to both consumers and companies about the importance of environmental information as it relates to selecting eco-friendly products and companies. (Kikuko Tatsumi)

➤ I collect and recycle items such as neckties and scarves which are used in uniforms, turn them back into fabric (threads) and make other products using them. (Harumi Tamaki)

➤ I am an expert representing Japan in the area of ISO environmental labeling. I conduct research to promote environmental information and the use of eco-labels in Japan. (Chie Nakaniwa)

➤ Taking advantage of my many years working as a newspaper reporter, I am primarily responsible for public relations and web strategy. Following up on an idea from young employees at Primtemps Ginza, I provide people with suggestions on how to have fun being eco-friendly in a fashionable way. (Yoshimi Nagamine)

➤ I promote the modal shift involving the first ever private sector “recycling port” in the Tokyo Bay and strive for further carbon dioxide reductions. (Hanako Yoshimoto)

### 3. Messages

#### (1) Sustainable Society-Building Led by Women’s Ability to Empathize

In a sustainable society, lifestyles and values that are friendly to both the local community and the environment become widespread and people’s hearts and

minds become healthier. We aim to create a sustainable society which realizes a low-carbon society in which greenhouse gas emissions are significantly reduced, a recycling-based society in which use of natural resources is minimized, and a society in which people live in harmony with nature and protect biological diversity.

However, efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and otherwise protect the environment are often viewed as “no fun,” so in order to have the nation take action, it is necessary to attract people who have previously had very little interest in the environment. This is where people practicing LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) have drawn attention. For example, young females and other employees at Primtemps Ginza started a “wear Aloha Shirt to Work Day.” This and other activities to promote being environmentally-conscious in a fashionable way are important so that people do not feel like they are being forced to be environmentally conscious, rather that they are, on their own volition, doing things in a manner that matches their own personality.

Sustainable lifestyles recommended by Environmental Businesswomen, which actively promotes the intelligent use of nature’s blessings, include the following:

- Live in sustainable home (well-insulated, active use of clean energy, wooden conventional construction, thatched roofs, use of rainwater, etc.) , take advantage of the local climate, choose energy-efficient appliances to match lifestyle, and use these appliances effectively.
- To the extent possible, choose food that is locally produced, organic, and which is not excessively packaged. Also, choose daily goods and clothing that are organic or made with recycled materials. Furthermore, as opposed to cheap items that will be thrown away quickly, select good items that can be used for a long period of time.
- Use the train or bus to commute to work or school. When time permits, get off one or two stops early and walk while enjoying the scenery and the flowers on the side of the road.
- Create an environmentally-friendly business model. Also, include the environment as a keyword in developing products, providing services, managing towns, and other activities.
- On weekends and holidays, rather than going shopping, spend time working in your home garden or at the community garden with friends planting or tending to organic vegetables and/or flowers. Use the vegetables you harvest to enjoy a vegetable barbecue party. Organize hiking trips and other opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Take in nature’s wonder with all five senses, and enjoy fresh, local food with people in the community. Travel via public transportation as much as possible, and offset the carbon dioxide emitted from your travel. Also, enjoy yoga and other fitness activities in order to keep your spirit and body in good balance. This is how we recommend spending weekends and holidays.
- When you purchase financial products or invest money, choose particular financial products which take environmental issues into consideration.
- In this type of lifestyle, women and men can both work and raise children with

sound senses. By being both physically and spiritually healthy, you make yourself, the local community, and the earth beautiful.

In order to realize this type of lifestyle, the following businesses and activities are essential to provide the necessary products and services.

**> Offering Products and Services Necessary for a Sustainable Lifestyle**

In order to practice sustainable living, one must use products and services that have little environmental impact through each stage, from manufacturing, to use, to disposal and recycling. Many women would like to see increasing number of department stores, supermarkets and mail-order marketing businesses promote products that are highly-functional, durable without losing appeal, are fashionable, well-designed, of high quality and environmentally-friendly (clothing made of recycled fabric, for example). Furthermore, with respect to this kind of distribution business, it is important to build a system in which rural areas and cities are connected so that money flows to initiatives aimed at sustainability.

In this regard, it is important to provide support to link consumers and companies so that companies actively and quickly develop and market products and services that meet consumers' needs.

**> Environmental Education and Information Dissemination to Promote Sustainable Living**

To begin with, environmental education and information dissemination are important tools to encourage people to comfortably practice sustainable living. One example of an effective approach is environmental education that teaches ways to make a low-energy consuming lifestyle enjoyable. Making "energy use forecasts" that support efficient energy-conserving initiatives from the four standpoints of home appliances, living style, housing, and climate, as well as the family lifecycle (a child is born, a child goes to school, a child becomes independent) could be one effective effort.

It is necessary to provide the public with information that encourages people to take action. Examples include eco-labels that provide consumers with environmental information in an easy-to-understand format, and magazines and other media that provide information about businesses and lifestyles that are friendly towards people, society and the environment. It would be desirable to have a system such as "ecolabel watchers" that check that eco-labels accurately describe products' environmental information. Furthermore, a new concept of beauty is necessary: one that encourages people to make themselves, the community, and the earth's environment beautiful while finding harmony between one's appearance, body, and spirit.

**> Initiatives from Recycling Industry, Finance, and Government to Support a Sustainable Society**

Sustainable living is not only for the purpose of pursuing direct environmental impact reductions as well as superficial fun and beauty. In addition to reducing the amount of waste produced, it is important to efficiently transport, reuse and recycle the waste from a wide range of recycling business activities.

It is also absolutely essential to reform financial systems so that the necessary money is invested in business activities that support sustainable lifestyles.

Furthermore, such business activities and lifestyles should be given incentives. In addition to economic support, there are high expectations for government (both at the local and national level) to create systems for actively evaluating both wisdom and values.

As leaders in the effort to create a sustainable society, Environmental Businesswomen will continue to actively and strategically carry out business activities to support this type of sustainable living.

## **(2) Necessary Initiatives for Realizing Sustainable Lifestyles**

Incentives are an effective way to encourage individuals to change their activities and habits, which makes incentives good for spreading the practice of sustainable living. Women are generally able to find enjoyment in completing small tasks which culminate in something larger. For example, many women would be happy to participate in an “eco-point” system, in which people receive points (that could later be exchanged for products) for purchasing energy-efficient products which contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions or by reducing their energy use through conservation.

To create a sustainable society it is also important to encourage people to select products and services which have small environmental footprints throughout their lifecycle, which includes resource extraction, manufacturing, transport, use and disposal.

A system where companies (those that wish to participate) could buy emissions credits for the amount of greenhouse gas emissions reduced by individual people and offset their own emissions would be an effective system for linking business and consumers. Furthermore, it would be wonderful if a scheme is established whereby individuals who voluntarily chose to purchase carbon offsets against their personal activities could then donate this amount to the government and receive a tax break.

Along with taking such initiatives to encourage a lifestyle that results in a sustainable society, it is crucial to develop environmental businesses and social entrepreneurs that will lead the transition to a sustainable society. There are still few environmental entrepreneurs who, like us, are turning environmental protection into a business. We hope to see an increase in intermediary organizations supporting the development of social entrepreneurs in the environmental arena who aim to make people, the community and the environment healthier than before.

It is also important to encourage a balance between work and personal life. The conventional working style is one of working late each night and giving up holidays in order to work. This style should be improved with a viewpoint of women. Such an ideal working style would involve work sharing, telecommuting and other ways of making work more efficient and thereby affording people time to focus on raising children and community activities. Such a style of working would benefit both women and men. A proactive stance towards work is important as well. In order to enjoy nature, lead a fulfilling life without waste and to free oneself from stress, we should, for example, introduce our own practices to raise our motivation, and introduce a culture that does not value overworking.

We hope that Environmental Businesswomen, the Ministry of the Environment and other related parties can work together to turn the above ideas into reality.

### **(3) Message from Environmental Businesswomen Concerning the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting and the G8 Toyako Summit**

Japan should be proud of its tradition and wisdom in terms of having established ways of living and local communities in where resources are recycled and people coexist with nature, as well as its high-tech capabilities to enable convenient living without waste. These strengths are the keys to creating a sustainable society. In order for Japan to create a sustainable society that serves as an example for the rest of the world, environmental businesswomen will do the following:

I Possess a sense of urgency about global warming and other environmental issues and practice sustainable living in a smart and sophisticated manner, taking care of a sense of living.

II Engage in business and social activities offering products, wisdom, services, information, financial services and social systems so that 100 million people can take at least one step, rather than one person trying to take 100 steps to combat environmental problems.

We, as environmental businesswomen, in conjunction with the G8 Environmental Ministers Meeting and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, confirm our commitment to work with environmental businesswomen overseas and the businesses they work on and to further advance our efforts (both in Japan and overseas) as role models to realize a sustainable society.