

**JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN  
THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
AND  
THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF JAPAN  
ON  
CONTINUED BILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION**

**May 16, 2016  
Toyama, Japan**

While gathered in Toyama, Japan for the G7 Environment Ministers' Meeting, the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Gina McCarthy, and the Minister of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan (MOEJ), Tamayo Marukawa, met to discuss accomplishments and plans for U.S. – Japan environmental cooperation. This builds on an August 24, 2015 meeting between Administrator McCarthy and then MOEJ-Minister Yoshio Mochizuki on a common view to enhance bilateral and regional environmental collaboration. While in Japan for the G7 meetings, Administrator McCarthy will also travel to Minamata to underscore our joint commitment to reduce mercury pollution and speak to students at a local high school recognized for their sustainability efforts. EPA and MOEJ will continue to hold high-level coordination at times convenient for both sides to further advance objectives.

**Mercury**

Both the U.S. and Japan are committed to the effective implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The U.S. and Japan are among 25 countries to date that have joined the Convention. Cooperation on mercury projects to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury has emerged as a prime topic of the EPA-MOEJ relationship. EPA and MOEJ appreciate each other's efforts for strengthening mercury monitoring capacity in the Asia-Pacific region. EPA and MOEJ will support an Asia Pacific Mercury Monitoring Network annual partner's meeting planned for summer 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. EPA and MOEJ are also planning a technical workshop to share monitoring information and data and coordinate measurements of ambient mercury concentrations in the Asia-Pacific in late 2016 in Minamata, Japan. The preparation of a proposal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is underway to enhance the value of our collaboration. During the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Minamata Convention (INC7) meetings in Jordan in March 2016, EPA and MOEJ worked to provide U.S.-Japan joint proposals for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention and continue to collaborate to integrate monitoring approaches in the implementation of the Convention. EPA and MOEJ are working with Indonesia to explore potential stakeholder roundtable meeting on artisanal small scale gold mining and to assess domestic and regional mercury flows.

**Climate Change**

EPA and MOEJ were among the agencies and nations that worked together on the historic Paris Agreement on climate change at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21). EPA and MOEJ are also working together

on an amendment to phasedown HFCs under the Montreal Protocol to reduce the rapidly growing climate impact of these gases, and determine acceptable baselines and schedules. EPA and MOEJ have decided to work together on knowledge sharing forums on adaptation actions through the Global Adaptation Network (GAN) including Sustained Learning Exchanges and City-to-City Exchanges, cooperating with the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) and other initiatives.

### **Regional Air Quality Management**

Through programs such as the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP), the Integrated Programme for Better Air Quality in Asia (IBAQA), and the Cities Clean Air Partnership (CCAP), environmental authorities around the world will be able to share best practices and demonstrate transparency in the field of air quality. EPA and MOEJ will continue to promote collaboration and best practices in the field of air quality protection in Asia. The CCAP, implemented by our common partner Clean Air Asia, has helped connect Kitakyushu, Japan with Haiphong, Vietnam to strengthen emissions inventories of air pollution in industrial zones and ports. New cities will be invited to join CCAP's city partnering initiative in 2017. EPA and MOEJ also plan to explore the possibility of sharing air quality information and encouraging other neighboring countries to do so through the programs such as the AirNow-International platform.

### **Decontamination of Contaminated Materials**

In the years following the Fukushima Daiichi accident in 2011, the Governments of Japan and the US have worked together to assist in the regions recovery, to learn from the disaster, and to take actions in both countries to prevent nuclear incidents. EPA and MOEJ collaborate through the Decommissioning and Environmental Management Working Group under the U.S.-Japan Bilateral Commission on Civil Nuclear Cooperation.

In November 2015, EPA and MOEJ participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. – Japan Bilateral Commission Meeting on Civil Nuclear Cooperation in Washington, DC, and have coordinated efforts with the U.S. Department of Energy, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and other federal and national agencies to strengthen the makeup of the Decommissioning and Environmental Management Working Group. Work together has included exchanges through ongoing radiological remediation research programs, collaborative work areas for urban radiological incident response, and EPA participation in a February 2016 expert visit on Environmental Remediation after the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment**

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) allow for environmental factors to be considered in the decision-making process, ensure that possible adverse environmental impacts are identified and addressed, and inform the public about the proposal. EPA and MOEJ are cooperating in Asia to share concepts, challenges, and good practices in improving EIAs for investment projects.

EPA convened the Second Lower Mekong Environmental Impact Assessment Directors Meeting, in Nagoya, Japan on May 9 of this year, supported by MOEJ. This meeting allowed Mekong EIA directors to exchange lessons learned and provide feedback to each other on ongoing EIA activities. The Mekong EIA directors also attended MOEJ's May 10 Asia EIA Conference 2016, "Enhancing EIA as a Sustainable Planning Tool in Asia." This conference aimed at

strengthening mutual learning and networking among international organizations and 15 Asian countries that participated to address key sustainability challenges. EPA delivered a keynote speech at the MOEJ conference on the work of the Lower Mekong EIA Directors. The results of this conference provided useful input to the International Association for Impact Assessment 2016 conference that was also held in Nagoya that week.

### **Children's Environmental Health and Environmental Education**

Recognizing that children are especially vulnerable to environmental health issues, EPA and MOEJ continue to share information that contributes to existing and ongoing science and research such as the Japan Environment and Children's Study with EPA participating in a December 2015 meeting of the International Advisory Board for the study in Tokyo.

EPA and MOEJ continue to share approaches and collaborate on environmental education, especially about youth learning and environmental education laws.