



Japan Environment Quarterly

News from the Ministry
of the Environment

Vol. 6 No. 4 December 2001

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Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister of the Environment of Japan at ECO ASIA 2001

ECO ASIA 2001

The Tenth Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA 2001) was held in Tokyo on 13 and 14 October 2001. It is a forum for free and open exchange of views among environmental ministers in Asia and the Pacific region about the environmental policies in the region. This year, the main topics included establishment of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development, output of Phase II of the ECO ASIA Long-Term Perspective Project, preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development next year, climate change, and ECO ASIA's future activities. The Summary of the Congress is described below.

Establishment of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED)

The concept of APFED evolved from a proposal made by Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister of the Environment of Japan at ECO ASIA last year to create a forum for eminent persons from the Asia-Pacific region. They are to consider the issues of environment and development, and to propose new development models for this region in the twenty-first century. APFED is to discuss economic, environmental and social issues, present its message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development next year, and make a final report by the year 2004. The ECO ASIA secretariat presented a draft of the Forum's terms of reference and timetable to Congress participants, who then approved its establishment. The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) has been assigned the role of secretariat for APFED. Participants voiced their expectations that the Forum would produce innovative and concrete proposals, including financing options for development of the region.

Output of ECO ASIA Long-term Perspective Project (LTPP) Phase II

The Congress endorsed the draft final report of Phase II of the ECO ASIA Long-term Perspective Project (LTPP), which lasted from 1998 to 2001. The LTPP is a scientific research project launched in 1993 to gather information about the current state of the environment in the Asia-Pacific region, predict future conditions up to the year 2025, and present policy proposals for the region. The draft report, entitled "Towards a Sustainable Asia and the Pacific," presented by Kazuo Matsushita of IGES, highlights the application of the LTPP's four key concepts (eco-consciousness, eco-partnership, eco-technology/eco-investment, and eco-policy linkages) to six critical environmental issues in Asia and the Pacific region: climate change, urban environment, freshwater, forests, biodiversity, and education for sustainability. A final version of this report will be presented to a WSSD regional preparatory meeting in November in Cambodia. The report will be made available

(cont'd pg.2, ECO ASIA 2001)

by Internet at www.iges.or.jp. Other information about the LTPP is available at www.ecoasia.org, including the 1997 report from Phase I.

Preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

The UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), to be held in Johannesburg in 2002 as the ten-year sequel to the historic "Earth Summit" of 1992, is seen by many as one of the most critical events of the next several years in terms of environment and development issues on Earth. Leading up to and during the Johannesburg Summit, many sectors of society will review the follow-up to the Earth Summit and discuss how the world should proceed to deal with sustainable development issues in the future. Because one goal of ECO ASIA is to provide a place for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss regional issues and have them reflected in international fora, the WSSD receives special attention from ECO ASIA.

Participants heard leadoff speeches from five speakers about preparations, key topics and expectations for the WSSD: Mr. Nitin Desai, United Nations Under-Secretary General; Dr. Klaus Topfer, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Dr. Kim Hak-Su, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); Prof. A.H. Zakri, Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies of the United Nations University (UNU/IAS); and Dr. Eimi Watanabe, Assistant Administrator and Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

During the ensuing discussion, participants added to the ideas presented by earlier speakers and identified a number of key points. They emphasized the need for a strong political will to find

solutions and produce concrete results in sustainable development. This involves the attention of high officials, including heads of state, as well as the involvement of all sectors of society, including NGOs, business, and local governments. They agreed on the importance of the current WSSD preparatory processes at national, sub-regional and regional levels. There was agreement that the WSSD needs to focus on concrete ways to achieve sustainable development. The following areas were identified as priority areas in the preparatory process: poverty-related issues; financing issues; technology development and transfer; governance issues, including inter-linkages between frameworks to address a variety of sustainable development topics; consumption patterns; health; oceans; freshwater; mountain ecosystems; land degradation; desertification; and the cultural and religious aspects of environmental issues.

Climate Change

In a lead-off speech, Mr. Hironori Hamanaka, Vice-Minister for Global Environment Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, presented his views regarding the upcoming 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-7). He stressed the commitment of assistance to developing countries to address climate change issues, and emphasized the importance of effective implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the need to start discussions about the design of the next steps to be undertaken after the conclusion of the first commitment period. In the discussion, participants noted that climate change was a real and urgent problem requiring cooperative efforts among countries. They also emphasized the importance of a global regime in which every country can participate under the principles stipulated in the UNFCCC and the

Kyoto Protocol. Country delegates spoke of their many efforts to date, such as recently introduced policies and legislation and national communications under the UNFCCC. They spoke appreciatively of these and other strategies and projects established through the cooperation of and assistance provided by the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Environment Project, United Nations Development Project, Asian Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, foreign governments, and so on. Countries also mentioned the areas of assistance they most urgently required, including areas such as research, technology transfer, and capacity building, among others. Participants noted the need for strong political will at COP7. They highlighted the need for Parties to reach agreement on the legal text of the detailed rules and procedures for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol at COP7 as well as the importance of the Protocol's early entry into force.

ECO ASIA's Future Activities

To build on the first ten years of ECO ASIA's experience, the Secretariat proposed the launch of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategy Project (APEIS) and the establishment of an ECO ASIA Panel to serve as a coordinating body for APEIS. The APEIS project is expected to further the outcomes of the LTPP for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and has three primary objectives: to build the scientific infrastructure for policy making, to promote environmental cooperation and capacity building, and to propose a model regional initiative. The APEIS project is to consist of three research activities focusing on the region, aiming to (1) develop integrated environmental monitoring, (2) promote environmental assessments using environment-economy integrated models, and (3) research options for strategic environmental policies. APEIS will

Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change

The Eleventh Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change was held in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture from 28 to 31 August. The major objectives of the Seminar were to exchange information, experience and views on climate change among countries in Asia and the Pacific and to facilitate further activities to address the climate change in the region.

The major topics of the eleventh seminar were (a) Scientific works in the IPCC Third Assessment Report, (b) Potential of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), (c) Adaptation measures in developing countries, (d) Promoting of the preparation of national communications under UNFCCC in Non-Annex I countries, (e) Issues relating to the Asia-Pacific Network on Climate Change (APNET), and (f) Measures taken by local governments to address global warming and regional cooperation.

The main issues pointed out by the participants, based on the Chairperson's Summary, are

listed below.

1. It is important to popularize the results of the IPCC's Third Assessment Report to both governments and private sectors as it is the latest state of scientific knowledge on the issue of climate change.

2. For smooth implementation of CDM projects, the formulation of legal and institutional arrangements in host countries is essential. It is also important to obtain cooperation and proper understanding from local residents.

3. There is a need to enhance research and studies about adaptation measures in developing countries. Also, practical guidelines and resource books on adaptation to climate change are indispensable.

4. Assistance is needed for non-Annex I countries to prepare their national communications, and the enhancement of cooperative relationships between experts is necessary.

5. It is hoped that APNET will be utilized for sharing information

between specialists on various projects, initiatives and important web sites, and that it may become a virtual CDM clearinghouse in the region.

6. It is hoped that examples of best practices conducted at the local level will be reflected in various policies and also reported adequately in national communications under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This seminar was organized by Japan's Ministry of the Environment, Fukuoka Prefecture, the City of Kitakyushu, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). The seminar was attended by fifty-two experts from eighteen countries and thirteen organizations. The Chairperson's Summary and more information about topics of this seminar can be found by accessing the website of the APNET at www.ap-net.org. 

Survey of Environmental Consideration in Overseas Projects

In September 2001 Japan's Ministry of the Environment released the results of a commissioned study about the policies of international financial institutions, in order to consider environmental aspects of development projects and investments in developing regions of the world. The report aims to promote better environmental consideration by institutions in Japan and overseas that provide development financing and investment.

Projects in developing countries can potentially affect the environment and local communities in many ways. Because of this, project implementers, international

financial institutions that fund the projects, and public export credit agencies in developed countries are being called upon to exercise environmental considerations relating to the projects.

In recent years, there has been an international trend to strengthen environmental considerations, as the world attempts to integrate the issues of environment and development, and to deal with the need for poverty alleviation. In this context, Japan's Ministry of the Environment decided to conduct an up-to-date survey of the environmental policies of key institutions and provide the results widely in Japan, to strengthen the environmental consideration by

Japan's institutions. Key topics covered in the report are briefly described below.

1. Institutions providing financial aid

The World Bank, the world's largest international public funding institution, requires that audits based on its environmental guidelines be conducted before implementing development projects. The guidelines were first set in 1989, then revised in 1999, and are considered to be the highest standards in the world at present. For example, World Bank environmental impact assessment procedures are defined uniquely, and project proponents must fulfil these in addition to the assessment

procedures that apply in the recipient country. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has similar environmental guidelines. Among regional development banks, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has its own environmental guidelines, although it only requires compliance with the environmental assessment procedures of the recipient country. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have policies for environmental consideration and procedures for audits, although they differ from the World Bank and the ADB's approach.

2. Policy recommendations by international organizations

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has adopted a council

decision on Guidelines for Multinational Corporations activities (which include environmental conservation) and on establishing an international framework for environmental consideration in Official Development Assistance (ODA). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has shown the importance of private financial institutions paying attention to environmental considerations, by adopting a declaration for financial institutions on the environment and sustainable development, as well as a declaration on the environmental commitment of the insurance industry.

3. Export credit agencies (ECAs)

ECAs from various countries are formulating common environmental guidelines through the OECD Trade Committee

Export Credit Group. The results of discussion about a "common approach" were expected in about November 2001.

In Japan, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), which was formed by the merger of the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) being responsible for ODA and the Export-Import Bank of Japan being responsible for export credit and so on, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, which provides export insurance, already have environmental guidelines in place. However, a study group, which also included non-governmental organizations and other experts, formulated recommendations on the key elements which should be considered in case of preparing new environmental guidelines of JBIC in September. 

Public Opinion Survey: Recycling-based Society

The Cabinet Office and the Ministry of the Environment conducted a national opinion poll in Japan from 5 to 15 July 2001 on the theme of a "recycling-based" society. The purpose of this survey was to determine public awareness about shifting towards a society with sound material cycles, to help in future planning. Five thousand people were surveyed; the response rate was 69.5 percent.

Questions were in four categories of public awareness: (1) waste problems, (2) ways of daily life, (3) measures of establishing for Recycling-based society, and (4) green purchasing. The main results are described below.

Waste and recycling problems

- Concern about the waste problem: about 90 percent of respondents answered that they were "concerned," "very concerned," or "somewhat concerned."
- Causes of the waste problem (multiple choice): about 70

percent of respondents think it is due to our lifestyles that depend on mass production, mass consumption and mass disposal. Also, about 70 percent think it is due to the excess use of disposable products in daily life.

- Attitude towards government measurements: about 50 percent count on governments control the generation of waste.
- Awareness of measures to control waste generation and establish systems with sound material cycles (multiple choice): about 70 percent answered that environmental education is important, about 40 percent answered that economic measures should be established, such as introduction of a deposit system, and about 40 percent expect corporations to take on more responsibilities.
- Switching from free garbage collection to charging fees for service: a total of 40 percent "agree" or "somewhat agree" to these fees, matching the 40

percent who "disagree" or "somewhat disagree."

- Public expectations of government support for activities of citizens' organizations (multiple choice): about 50 percent count on the government to provide the information necessary for environmental activities, and about 30 percent expect the government to support the formation of networks.

Green purchasing

- Environment-friendly purchasing: more than 80 percent replied to prefer environmentally friendly products.
- Barriers for green purchasing: more than 50 percent of respondents feel they encounter barriers when trying to purchase environmentally friendly products. the reason why, 30 percent indicate the lack of appropriate information, and 20 percent state that prices are higher than normal products. 

New Guide to Prevent Light Pollution

The Ministry of the Environment recently published a guidebook addressing the problems of light pollution and ways to prevent it. It shows how local governments can utilize existing regulations and programs, and indicates how to establish effective new local light environment plans and light pollution prevention regulations. Another aim is to help prevent global warming by optimizing outdoor lighting and creating an efficient light environment.

Long-term and integrated approaches are needed to deal with light pollution. A long-term view is required because infrastructure for outdoor lighting is often installed on a long-term basis, and the replacement of equipment, once installed, happens many years later. In addition, because any single measure to deal with light pollution will only cover a part of the problem, systematic and integrated approaches are needed. The guidebook is composed of four sections, as described below.

1. Overview of the issue of light pollution

Light pollution is caused by the leakage of light, which illuminates beyond the targeted area. It is divided into three categories, based on impact: effects on human activities, effects on flora and fauna, and the excess consumption of energy.

2. Initiatives

The basic principle for outdoor

lighting equipment is that the purposes of the lighting should be made clear. The right lighting should then be used to illuminate the targeted objects or range, with the needed brightness. Lighting that illuminates beyond the targeted area creates unnecessary glare and decreases visibility and safety. Stopping light leakage is a basic goal of preventing light pollution. The merits of tackling light pollution include increased safety and security; facilitation of nighttime outdoor activities; improved coexistence with flora and fauna; and energy savings (which reduce economic costs as well as CO₂ emissions). As an example of energy savings, by making some improvements, one model project succeeded in reducing energy consumption for outdoor lighting by 50 percent.

The key point in selecting the proper lighting is in the choice of lighting equipment, which (a) illuminates the targeted range efficiently, (b) does not leak light upwards, (c) does not emit uncomfortable glare, and (d) is energy-efficient. Two essential measures needed in order to evaluate each lighting situation include the proportion of luminous flux (in percent) that is oriented upwards, and the total lighting efficiency (in lumens per Watt of electricity consumed by the light source).

3. Systems and measures

The guidebook identifies numerous existing regulations, ordinances and programs of local

governments in Japan that can be applied to the issue of light pollution, including their basic environment ordinances, and specific regulations affecting pollution, outdoor advertising, and scenery, as well as local and regional plans, such as comprehensive environment programs, global warming prevention programs, etc. Environmental assessments, and environmental management (e.g., ISO14000) can also be useful. The guidebook goes on to recommend how individual towns (or groups of towns in a region) can effectively develop a comprehensive regional lighting environment plan, and finally, addresses key points in enacting a local light pollution prevention ordinance.

4. Further steps

Ultimately, comprehensive systems should be established at the local level to prevent light pollution, with the participation of local public bodies, citizens (and citizens' groups), businesses, and specialists such as lighting environment designers. Elements of a successful system may include awareness-raising (basic knowledge and technical information), proactive initiatives, support to citizens' groups and the private sector, development of education systems and the holding of seminars, implementation of model areas and model projects, and finally, improvements in the regulatory and planning infrastructure. 

Citizen's Guide for understanding PRTR data

As reported in past issues of the JEQ, in April 2001 it became mandatory for businesses in Japan to estimate their emissions and transfers of chemical substances, using the pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR) system. The system is based on the Law Concerning Reporting, etc. of Releases of Specific Chemical Substances to the Environment and Promoting the Improvements of in Their Management, which was promulgated in July 1999. The Ministry of the Environment produced an easy-to-understand guidebook in Japanese, entitled "Citizens' Guide for Understanding PRTR data—from the Results of the FY2000 Pilot Project," so that the public can use the PRTR data. The guide is composed of three chapters, described below, with the themes of "knowing," "reading" and "using" PRTR data.

Over 50,000 chemicals are said to be used widely in Japan via industrial, economic and consumer activity. To reduce the risks posed by hazardous chemical substances, PRTR systems have been established in several countries to date. Japan has also tackled to reduce the risks caused by chemical substances and implemented the PRTR pilot project to collect the basic data and develop the Japanese PRTR system every year since 1997.

PRTR system is based on businesses first estimating their own quantities of emissions of designated chemical substances, as well as those substances in waste transferred off-site. The businesses then report the data to the government, which compile the data, calculate emissions and

transfers, and make the information public. The significance of PRTR is fivefold:

1. Provide basic data for environmental conservation
2. Provide valuable information for governments to decide on priorities of the policies in addressing chemical substances
3. Promote improvements of voluntary efforts by businesses
4. Promote citizen awareness about emissions and handling of chemical substances
5. Ascertain the progress and results of environmental policies relating to chemical substances

Risk communication is important for using PRTR effectively. Its definition is information sharing for better understanding about environmental risks among citizens, businesses, and administrations.

It is necessary in risk communication not only to provide the information of emissions under the PRTR system but also to provide it in appropriate ways that will promote understanding. Furthermore, consultation and response to the questions about the information are essential.

The information providing system, communicational techniques, a certain forum for communication and specialists for risk communication should be developed in order to encourage risk communication. Government also should support them.

Chapter 1: Knowing about PRTR

What is a PRTR system? What chemical substances must be

reported? Which businesses must report? How do they report? What about emissions that are not from businesses? How is information released made public?

Chapter 2: Reading the results of PRTR surveys

This section provides an outline and the results of the PRTR pilot project in the FY 2000. It covers releases to the environment (air, water, soil and landfills) and transfers from business as well as non-business releases. About 16,000 businesses' sites in 30 prefectures of Japan participated in the pilot project. Data are classified by substance, location and medium/etc. Explanations of the meaning of the data are provided.

Chapter 3: Using data under the PRTR

This section explains how PRTRs can be used in one's local community and describes PRTRs of other countries. It also introduces case studies of risk communication, explains how to obtain PRTR data, and includes a glossary of special terminology.

Although this guide was produced based on the results of the pilot project in the FY 2000 (Japan has held a pilot project every year since 1997 in order to develop its PRTR system), the Ministry of the Environment plans to report the first official data based on Japan's new PRTR system in the latter half of FY 2002. More information about this guide (in Japanese) is available on the Internet at

<http://www.env.go.jp/chemi/prtr/guide/index.html>



3rd Junior Eco-Club Asia-Pacific Conference



Child representation which hands an appeal sentence to the mayor

The 3rd Junior Eco-Club Asia-Pacific Conference, held in Nishinomiya City, Hyogo Prefecture from 28 to 30 August 2001, provided the opportunity for children to learn the importance of the environment and to develop relationships across national boundaries. Participants came from China, Korea, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States (Hawaii), as well as Japan. In total, 1,000 people attended the conference. With the aim of holding the conference through their own initiative, young people played a big role in organizing it; about 60 volunteers, consisting of university and high school students, assisted the children's environmental studies as interpreters and supporters.


The goal of the conference was to encourage children's environmental conservation activities through interaction and

cooperation with others in the same region who conduct similar activities. It also aimed to promote environmental education and study by highlighting children's activities and hopes for global environmental conservation, and to expand the network of local environmental conservation activities.

Participants experienced nature observation, recreational events and workshops. They learned about and discussed environmental problems affecting the sea (at Koushienhama (hama means beach)), the mountains (at Mt. Rokko), and rivers (Ni River) in Hyogo Prefecture. On the final day, the Children's Environmental Conference was held as the venue to report the results of their workshops. After a lively exchange of views, participants adopted a declaration that included a fifteen-point action plan, and pledged to

take action for environmental conservation. The action plan of the conference declaration is as follows.

Action Plan

1. Use recycled items if they are available.
2. Dispose of garbage responsibly.
3. Respect life around us—trees, flowers, insects, etc.
4. Make our towns green.
5. Do not release oil and synthetic detergents to the rivers and sea.
6. If we own pets, care for them in a way that is in balance with nature.
7. To prevent air pollution, reduce the use of cars or motorcycles. Instead, walk if the destination is nearby.
8. To prevent global warming and to save energy, try to avoid using the air conditioner.
9. Participate actively in environmental conservation activities.
10. Be gentle to other people, to nature, and to animals.
11. Try to reduce fossil-fueled power generation and instead use electricity generated from natural sources.
12. Reduce excess packaging of food and other items.
13. Do not buy unnecessary items.
14. Make laws that penalize people who pollute the earth.
15. Carry our own shopping bags. 

(from pg.2, ECO ASIA 2001)

be undertaken in close collaboration with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (a four-year initiative to study the state of the world's ecosystems, launched in June 2001, involving the United Nations, scientific groups, governments, and other international agencies), the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), and other relevant projects and agencies. The Congress participants endorsed the launch of APEIS and establishment

of the ECO ASIA Panel.

The Congress heard from Prof. Emil Salim the results of a meeting held concurrently with ECO ASIA—the Conference on Global Environmental Crisis, organized by Global Environmental Action (GEA) in cooperation with UNDESA. Participants also received a report from Prof. Morishima on the APFED organizational meeting held on 14 October.


ECO ASIA was launched in 1991 by the Environment Agency

of Japan, in order to provide input from the Asia-Pacific region to the Earth Summit the following year, and is regarded as an important forum on environmental policy in the region. The Congress this year was attended by 88 participants, including 13 ministers, with 21 countries and 12 international organizations represented. It was hosted by Japan's Ministry of the Environment and chaired by Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister of the Environment of Japan. 

National Survey of Big Trees

Natural Environment Bureau of the Ministry of the Environment published the results of the Sixth National Survey on the Natural Environment, entitled "Follow up Survey of Big Trees and Big Groves." The object of this survey was to determine the present state of big trees, to be used as information to help in nature conservation.

This survey was conducted in the year 2000 to determine the state of the big trees that were reported in the first survey (in 1988) as well as those that have been found since then. Targeted by the surveys were trees with a circumference of 3 meters or more at a height of 1.3 meters from the ground, as well as species that do not easily reach that circumference, such as camellia and the Japanese spindle tree (*Euonymus sieboldianus*). With a total of 1,661 local governments and National Big Tree Association members answering the survey, the response rate reached 51 percent. Results show that 10,367 new big trees were discovered, while 1,660 trees previously identified had either died or been cut down. In total, 64,479 big trees were counted in this survey, compared to 55,798 in the first survey. More big trees in mountainous regions and isolated islands were reported than in the first survey. The biggest trees identified in this survey are the Chinese hackberry (*Celtis sinensis*) in the village of Ichu in Tokushima Prefecture, and chinquapin (*Castanopsis cuspidata*) in the village of Mikurashima on an island east of Honshu, etc. However, many big trees may remain undiscovered throughout the country. The surveys reveal the fact that many of the big trees have survived in the context of some kind of relationship to human activities, as suggested by the name of the tree, the beliefs of people living nearby and the form of ownership.

The Ministry of the Environment plans to publish the report of the survey and distribute a summary pamphlet to parties who cooperated in the survey, as an aid for the conservation and wise use of the big trees. 



Chinese hackberry (*Celtis sinensis*)
(Village of Ichu, Tokushima Prefecture)



Chinquapin (*Castanopsis cuspidata*)
(Village of Mikurashima on an island east of Honshu)

For more information about events and articles in JEQ please contact the Global Environment Bureau.

Japan
ENVIRONMENT
Quarterly

Published by the Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment
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2002

January

9-11 OECD/EPOC/WPEP Working Party on Environmental Performance (Paris, France)

14-16 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment/Board Meeting (Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur)

February

4-8 Ninth Consultative Meeting of JAPAN-CHINA Migratory Birds Agreement & Eleventh Consultative Meeting of JAPAN-AUSTRALIA Migratory Birds Agreement

April

8-19 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Hague, Netherlands)