

To Readers:

This booklet is based on the 2002 edition of the White Paper on the Environment, officially announced by the Cabinet of the Japanese Government in May. In preparing this booklet, the text of the White Paper has been edited to make it more accessible and easier to understand for the general public.

The theme of this year's White Paper is "movement towards construction of sustainable society." We understand that this is the time for tackling structural reform of the entire society and is a good opportunity for moving towards a sustainable socio economic system, and also to introduce practical measures for various subjects and new concepts as the background.

The White Paper indicates the necessity for two healthy cycles, a socio economic system and a natural environment, and the necessity for achievement of high environmental efficiency that exceeds the economic growth. It also introduces various measures that are currently being made actively by the citizens and enterprises and new strategies by the Government. Considering future environmental constraint and the possibility of further environmental measures, the paper also clarifies the necessity for urgent measures including the review of the current mass-production, mass-consumption, and mass-waste producing socio economic system, and that such measures will bring positive outcomes to the economy in the long run and also can contribute to the international standing of Japan.

We will be very pleased if this booklet is useful for the enhancement of each reader's awareness regarding environmental problems and can provide guidelines for actual activities for an actively sustainable society.

The cover illustration is a work by Homare Nagano, a third grade student at Wadamisaki Elementary School in Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture. Homare won the Minister of the Environment Award (Elementary and Junior High School Division) in the "Year 2002 White Paper on the Environment Cover Page Illustration Contest" organized by Ministry of the Environment and Japan Environmental Association.

Commenting on this work, Homare said, "I drew this picture, hoping that I could play on a clean beach forever with my family."

The illustration on the back cover is a work by Aya Itami, a second grade student at Takamatsu Industrial Arts High School, Kagawa Prefecture. Aya won the President of the Japan Environment Association Award (General Division) in the "Year 2002 White Paper on the Environment Cover Page Illustration Contest."

Aya described her work by saying, "I arranged a good environment on the left-hand side and a bad environment on the right-hand side of the screen, I expressed good and bad using colors and postures for the person on the center. By separating the scene into three parts of sky, land, and ocean, I tried to present various environmental issues."