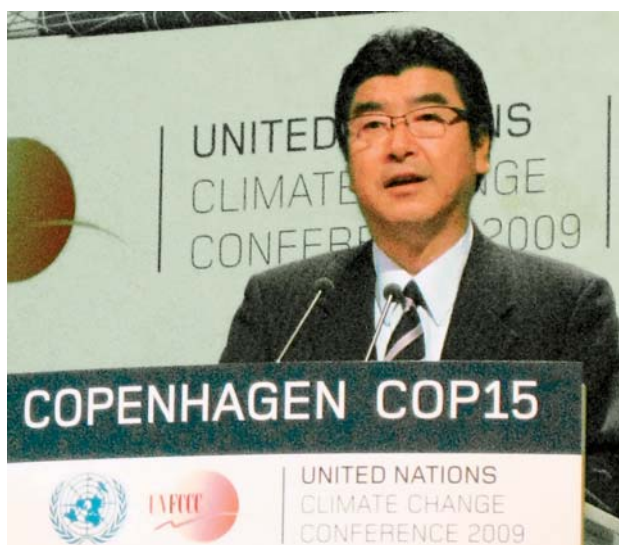


# Foreword

## Minister of the Environment Sakihito Ozawa



This White Paper for FY2010 combines Annual Reports on the Environment, the Sound Material-Cycle Society, and the Biodiversity in Japan into one to provide readers with broader and more in-depth knowledge on environmental issues.

The government's effort against global warming has changed significantly. I have been working on global warming countermeasures with a strong resolve to turn "Japan into a society free of fossil fuels". This has become possible only after a change of perception from the view where global warming countermeasures conflict with the economic interests to the view where the environmental sector leads overall economic growth. Japan has announced that it will reduce the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) 25% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, under certain conditions. The government has already clarified the overall policy vision based on three pillars: domestic emission trading system, taxation system for global warming countermeasures, and fixed price purchasing system for entire generated renewable energy, in the bill of the Basic Act on Global Warming Countermeasures. Moreover, I proposed "the Medium to Long-term Roadmap for Global Warming Countermeasures (drafted by Minister of Environment, Sakihito Ozawa)" to show steps to achieve this goal, which is also introduced in this White Paper. A national campaign to reduce GHG by 25% called "Challenge 25 Campaign" has been launched since January of this year, and we would like to have as many participants as possible.

In the international arena, Japan will play an active role in building a framework that will include the United States, China, and other major GHG emitters, in the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change (COP16) to be held in November.

In October, "the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10)" will be held in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture. The conference will feature discussion on the formulation of post-2010 biodiversity target, building of international framework on the Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) of Genetic Resources, and other key issues that will greatly affect the future of all life on the Earth. It is said that the Earth was born 4.6 billion years ago and that the first life emerged about 4 billion years ago. Diverse forms of life and the surrounding environment nurtured over many years are facing the risk of extinction due to human activities. The responsibility of the current generation is to put a stop to such situations and pass down our one and only "planet Earth for all life forms" to future generations in a sound manner. In the COP10, Japan will lead the international community toward realizing mutual coexistence of humankind and nature on a global scale.

Looking at the reality of population, energy, and use of natural resources, including water, economy, and other human activities on a global scale, there is no choice but to utilize natural resources and energy in a sustainable manner, for which it is essential to build a material-cycle society and achieve technological breakthroughs to push this effort forward.

For the future building of our nation, we need to learn from past mistakes and never repeat them again. For example, Minamata disease, the first pollution case in Japan which also catalyzed the establishment of the Environment Agency which would later become the Ministry of the Environment, still inflicts suffering to a number of people a half century since the outbreak. This year, a basic agreement toward settlement was reached between the national government and the patients' group in March, followed by a Cabinet decision on the policy for relief measures in April. On May 1, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama attended the memorial ceremony for the victims of Minamata disease as the first Prime Minister to do so, and offered his prayer. The government will continue addressing the issue of Minamata disease with full effort.

In order to pass down our green Earth without fail, we must commit ourselves to the future and fulfill our current responsibilities. For that, it is essential to achieve a balance between the environment and economic growth. I hope that this White Paper will serve as a useful tool to share this belief with you all.