

Japan's New Action Plan towards a Global Zero Waste Society

“Japan's New Action Plan for Accelerating the Establishment of
Sound Material-Cycle Societies Internationally through the 3Rs”
(tentative translation)

May 25, 2008

1. Introduction

With the advancement of economic and social activities and globalization, the world, including both developed and developing countries, is now faced with the double challenge of increasingly serious waste problems, as well as soaring prices for, and an unstable supply of, resources. These challenges are closely linked with a rising environmental burden, including climate change impacts caused by greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, both developed and developing countries are expected to efficiently utilize the earth's limited resources and reduce the impact on the environment through the domestic and international circulation of resources by promoting environmentally sound waste management and the 3Rs. As members of the international community, we must also collaborate and cooperate to integrate activities that aim to establish sound material cycle societies with those that establish low carbon and nature harmonious societies, always aiming at the establishment of a sustainable society.

Under the 3R Initiative, which was proposed by Japan and agreed upon at the G8 Sea Island Summit in the United States in 2004, the importance of the promotion of the 3Rs has been widely recognized. Concrete 3R practices have advanced not only within each G8 member country, but also in countries in Asia through collaboration and cooperation promoted by Japan and international organizations. Taking the opportunity of the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting in Kobe in May 2008, which addressed the need for further action to promote the 3Rs, Japan is announcing a new Action Plan for Global Zero Waste Societies, thereby demonstrating Japan's determination to support the establishment of sound material cycle societies internationally.

2. Japan's Fundamental Position on the International Promotion of the Establishment of Sound Material-Cycle Societies

Based on the 2nd Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, which was decided by a Cabinet meeting in March 2008, Japan decided to further enhance activities to establish a sound material-cycle society domestically. Under this Fundamental Plan, Japan will take a leading role in the international promotion of the establishment of sound material-cycle societies by disseminating state-of-the-art mechanisms, advanced technologies and systems, and Japan's experiences in activities by and collaboration with stakeholders. In so doing Japan will promote the 3Rs and environmentally sound waste management in an integrated manner, taking the protection of intellectual property rights, as well as the circumstances in individual countries, into account.

To promote the establishment of sound material-cycle societies internationally through the 3Rs, Japan's fundamental position is as follows: first, build a sound material cycle society in each country by promoting environmentally sound waste management and the 3Rs; at the same time, prevent illegal trade in waste; and, after sufficiently implementing these first two steps, promote smoother international trade in recyclable resources as a supplement to the domestic circulation of resources.

Based on this fundamental position, Japan will take the following actions:

3. Specific Actions

(1) Support the integrated promotion of environmentally sound waste management and the 3Rs based on country-specific needs

(a) Support the development of strategies and policy dialogues in line with the needs of each country

- Encourage development aid agencies and international financial institutions to promote activities based on 3R National Strategies after identifying the needs of each country through support for the development of national strategies for the 3Rs.
- Promote the development of national strategies for the 3Rs in countries in the Mekong Sub-region and South Asia by disseminating actual strategy development experiences to these countries.
- Promote policy dialogues with waste management and recycling bureaus in China, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and other countries for mutual collaboration leading to strengthened capacity in policy planning and implementation.
- Collaborate with China and the Republic of Korea to urge G8, Asian, and other countries throughout the world to take concrete action to reduce waste, such as scaling down the use of disposable plastic bags, in a manner appropriate to the situation in each country.
- In order to reduce marine litter, facilitate policy dialogues under the North-West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), and promote activities such as awareness raising campaigns and field surveys in collaboration with neighbouring countries.

(b) Development of human resources

- Develop essential human resources who can contribute to waste management and the 3Rs via training courses for central and local governments and businesses in developing countries and the dispatch of experts organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as well as through the Green Aid Plan (GAP).

(c) Integrated activities for policy planning, and institutional and infrastructure development

- Integrate the elements of the 3Rs (such as separated collection of municipal solid waste, formalization of recycling activities, and development of related equipment and facilities) into technical co-operation projects through JICA, as well as yen loan projects through the Japan

Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). Environmental education and awareness building on the 3Rs will also be implemented through such cooperation schemes.

- Promote the support of transportation of reused goods to developing countries through “Grants for Grass-roots Human Security Projects,” as well as “Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects.”
 - Support environmental protection activities, including the 3Rs, by both domestic and foreign civic organizations through the Japan Fund for Global Environment and other mechanisms.
 - Promote international cooperation to support the 3Rs in all countries in the Asian region and at the regional level through collaboration with developmental assistance organizations such as the Asian Development Bank.
 - Promote international standardization of environmental management accounting (Material Flow Cost Accounting) together with the dissemination of specifications and standards in the Asian region on the quality of recyclable resources.
- (d) Utilization of knowledge and experience of local governments and private businesses and other stakeholders
- Support inter-city cooperation to disseminate and transfer good practices, as well as the experiences and knowledge of local governments in Japan through local governmental networks in Asia, in view of the seriousness of waste problems in Asian cities.
 - Promote the development of equipment and facilities for environmentally sound recycling and efficient use of resources through inter-industrial collaboration in developing countries by transferring Japan’s experience and know-how of developing Eco-Town sites.
 - Promote Green Productivity activities, such as resource efficient manufacturing and greening of supply-chains in Asia and the Pacific region through collaboration with the Asia Productivity Organization (APO). (The fifth Eco-Products International Fair is planned to be held in the Philippines in March 2009.)
 - Collect information on good practices and implement pilot projects through the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment promoted through inter-organizational collaboration of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, and the City of Kitakyushu.
 - Promote mutual understanding among and action by central and local governments, businesses, and NGOs through the organization of the 3Rs/Circular Economy Seminar under the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and Korea (TEMM).
- (e) Strengthening knowledge and information bases
- Strengthen knowledge bases and information dissemination through the 3R Knowledge Hub and the “Waste Data Sharing System for China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea” (tentative title); promote the development of methodologies for basic data collection, such as the amount of waste generated, by supporting the network activities of experts and researchers, such as the “Society of Solid Waste Management Experts in Asia and Pacific Islands.” Support activities in

each country by sharing information on policies and experience through the establishment of the “Asian 3R Research and Information Network” for facilitating collaboration of the above activities.

- Take on the role of chair in activities of the Thematic Working Group on Solid and Hazardous Wastes (TWGSHW) of the Regional Forum on Environment and Health in Southeast and East Asian Countries, and promote better understanding of the needs in each country, and data collection and analysis of municipal solid waste and medical waste management. Contributions to the creation of good practices in each country can also be made by disseminating the outcomes of the activities and experiences of Japan through collaboration with the TWGSHW and 3R Knowledge Hub.

(f) Development of mechanisms to promote international cooperation in Japan

- Organize a forum to share information and promote mutual collaboration for implementing international activities, in relation to the promotion of the 3Rs in Asia, in an effective and integrated manner by inviting related ministries and agencies, relevant organizations, private businesses, local governments, research organizations, and NGOs.
- Consider a mechanism to conduct surveys on environmental pollution from environmentally unsound management of waste, including garbage and night soil, in response to needs in developing countries, as well as provide advice to improve the environment by utilizing experts in waste management and the 3Rs in Japan.

(2) Contribute to Global Warming Countermeasures through Environmentally Sound Waste Management and the 3Rs

- Promote co-benefit type co-operation in the area of waste management and the 3Rs, based on the “Cool Earth Partnership” announced by Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in January 2008, including the following activities for example:
 - Promotion of the 3Rs, such as separated collection, reduction of waste through separation, and composting.
 - Development and improvement of final landfill sites to contribute to the prevention of landfill gas emissions.
 - Implementation of environmentally sound management of and energy recovery from organic wastes disposed by businesses.

(3) Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes

- Promote information exchange and support for capacity development to ensure environmentally sound export and import of hazardous wastes through the “Asian Network for the Prevention of Illegal Import and Export of Hazardous Wastes.”
- Support the control of imports and exports and promotion of sound management of e-wastes in individual countries through “Environmentally Sound Management of E-waste in the Asia-Pacific Region,” which is implemented under the Basel Convention.

(4) Actions to Establish a Sound Material Cycle Society at Regional Level in Asia

- Develop a “Vision of a Sound Material Cycle Society in East Asia” by 2012 to lay the groundwork for setting basic approaches and goals in collaboration with other countries in the region.
 - Hold high-level dialogue towards the creation of a sound material-cycle society at the regional level at ministerial meetings such as the East Asia Summit (EAS) Environment Ministers Meeting, the TEMM, and the Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific.
 - Propose the immediate initiation of a dialogue process among countries in the region.
 - Conduct surveys and research to gain knowledge of local situations and collect related data on resource circulation in Asia.
- Facilitate the import of wastes that are difficult to treat in an environmentally-sound manner in developing countries, but can be treated within the management capacity of Japan.
- Towards resource productivity and reduce environmental impacts associated with resource consumption in Asian countries by:
 - Disseminating the progress and achievements of the work by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on material flow analysis and resource productivity and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) International Panel on Sustainable Resource Management to Asian countries.
 - Sharing information and experiences and facilitating the exchange of experts with countries that promote measure to increase resource productivity, such as China and the Republic of Korea.

(5) Collaborate with G8 Member Countries, International Organizations and Networks to Create a Global Sound Material-Cycle Society

- Collaborate with other G8 member countries and the OECD on a follow-up of the “Kobe 3R Action Plan” agreed upon at the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting in 2008.
- Further promote sustainable resource management, increase in resource productivity, and 3R activities in collaboration with other G8 member countries and international organizations such as UNEP and the OECD.
- Disseminate and promote research on Material Flow Accounts internationally.
- Promote the purchase of environmentally-friendly products and services internationally, in collaboration with the International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN).