

# Welcome Address

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My name is Hironori Hamanaka, and I am the Vice-minister for Global Environmental Affairs.

I would like to say a few words of greeting on the occasion of this International Symposium on Environmental Endocrine Disrupters 2002, on behalf of the organizer, the Ministry of the Environment.

First of all, I would like to thank and welcome everyone who has gathered here from science and industrial communities, NGOs and administrative bodies around the world and from all over Japan, to participate in this international symposium here in Hiroshima.

In today's society, endocrine disrupters pose a risk of serious multi-generational effects on human and other lives, making them one of the most important issues in environmental protection.

As for the chemicals in question, however, many points remain scientifically unclear. There are no established techniques for testing to determine whether endocrine disruptive effects exist in the relevant chemicals, and assessing risks of such chemicals. Japan and other advanced nations are working together to take charge of creating and developing test methods, as part of an international cooperative effort among scientists under the auspices of the OECD.

1. In Japan, as elsewhere, in 1998 we at the Ministry of the Environment drew up the "Strategic Programs on Environmental Endocrine Disrupters - SPEED '98," and listed chemicals suspected of acting as endocrine disrupters, now being methodically evaluated in terms of environmental risk. This has led to the confirmation that nonylphenol and 4-octylphenol act as endocrine disrupters in fish species.
2. International coordination and cooperation is an important part of our study and research if we are to tackle the issues concerning endocrine disrupters. Japan has annually held these international symposiums since 1998, with the participation of top researchers active around the world. The symposium serves as a forum for wide-ranging discussions from scientific points of view.

The program open to the public for today is intended to develop the awareness of the endocrine disrupter problems to the public, including industrial communities and NGOs, and to encourage them to see this as a personally relevant issue. I hope that this opportunity will help us to deepen our understanding of the issue and to work together on the search for solutions.

We at the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan, in cooperation with global society, will renew our efforts to clarify and solve the endocrine disrupter problems as well as various environmental problems which the world faces.

And finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to all those involved in the symposium, to all the members of the Japan Society of Endocrine Disrupters Research, and to others who offered their cooperation, including Hiroshima Prefecture, City of Hiroshima, Hiroshima University and the researchers who have supported the symposium.