

## “Environmental Policy Development in Japan”

Kazuhiko TAKEMOTO

Deputy Director-General  
Global Environment Bureau  
Ministry of the Environment

### 1. Introduction

### 2. Recent Policy Development in Japan

- (1) Follow-up of WSSD
- (2) Climate Change
- (3) Environmental Education
- (4) Sound Material-Cycle Society
- (5) Air Quality Management
- (6) Water Quality Management
- (7) Chemicals
- (8) Bio diversity

### 3. International Cooperation

- (1) Acid Deposition / Dust and Sandstorms (DSS)
- (2) Marine Pollution Prevention
- (3) Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- (4) Local Governments' Initiatives

### 4. Conclusion

## 1. Introduction

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I am pleased to welcome all the participants to the 12<sup>th</sup> Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC). Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Toyama Prefecture Government and Toyama City Government as well as the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC) for their supports, which make this conference realize in a smooth manner.

As you have already noted, we started the NEAC in 1992 and we convene it every year since then. I would like to underline that this initiative has been developed by strong participation and enthusiastic commitments of each country in close collaboration of UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. It is very important for us to exchange information on and experiences in environmental policy development and to discuss our common interests including regional cooperation through this regular meeting.

I am very pleased to share with you our initiatives in developing environmental policies in Japan.

## 2. Recent Policy Development in Japan

### (1) Follow-up of WSSD

In September last year, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) concluded with the following outcomes; (a) Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), (b) Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, and (c) Type II Partnership Initiatives. We are now getting into the implementation phase to follow up these commitments.

I would like to highlight our initiative on sustainable consumption and production as one of outstanding examples. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation encourages the government to develop a 10-year framework of programmes in support of accelerating shift towards sustainable consumption and production. In line with this, the government of Japan formulated the “Basic Plan for a Sound-Material Cycle Society” as a 10-year framework of program. I will touch on this later in more detail.

### (2) Climate Change

Japan ratified the Kyoto Protocol in June last year. In order to meet our Kyoto targets, we have implemented policies and measures based on the Guidelines to Address Global Warming. The Guidelines were decided by a Cabinet-level Task Force, consisting of all relevant Ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister.

### (3) Environmental Education

At the WSSD, Japan proposed the “Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”. The UN General Assembly adopted this proposal last December.

In Japan, a new Law on Promotion of Environmental Education was enacted last July to further support NGOs, citizen groups and private sectors in developing their activities in environmental education. The implementation of this Law will be able to contribute to the preparation for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which will start in 2005.

#### (4) Sound Material-Cycle Society

As stated before, the government of Japan made a cabinet decision on the “Basic Plan for Sound Material-Cycle Society” last March. A “sound material-cycle society” is defined as a society in which the consumption of natural resources is minimized and environmental load is reduced as much as possible. In light of this, the Basic Plan decides quantitative targets for the indicators on resource productivity, recycling rates and the amount of final waste disposals.

We are now getting into the implementation phase of this Basic Plan in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including local governments, citizens, NGOs and private sectors.

#### (5) Air Quality Management

To address air pollution in the urban areas, Japan decided to introduce the most stringent regulations in the world to control emissions from diesel-powered vehicles from 2005.

I am pleased to report that the “International Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Transport in Asia” was organized in Nagoya last March to discuss the desirable transport in Asia. Following up the outcome of this conference, “Policy Dialogue on Environment and Transport in Asia” is scheduled for next January in Manila.

#### (6) Water Quality Management

The government is working intensively to cope with organic pollution, which is addressed by the comprehensive measures to reduce total organic pollutant loads and the control of wastewater effluent into enclosed waters. Japan has to implement comprehensive measures for not only water quality, but also water quantity and the conservation of waterfront ecosystems. It is very important to realize sound water cycle.

The Third World Water Forum was held in Kyoto and neighbor Cities last March. Japan would like to work together with international community to implement the projects listed in the Portfolio of Water Actions, which is one of the outcomes of the Ministerial conference. Following up the outcome of this Forum, the Water Environmental Partnership in Asia (WEPA) has been proposed to assist the countries, for their planning and implementation of policy and measures to conserve water by developing a database on water environment. The inception workshop of WEPA will be

held in next year to discuss the project's framework and involvement of stakeholders.

#### (7)Chemicals

In order to avoid environmental risks caused by chemical substances, the Law on PRTR was enacted in 1999. This Law requires the enterprises to take further actions on their chemical management through reporting system.

In addition, the Law on Assessment of Chemical Substances was amended last May to incorporate the dimension of ecosystems into the chemical assessment process.

#### (8)Biodiversity

Biodiversity is one of the most important policy agenda in Japan. The “New National Strategy on Biodiversity” was decided at the Cabinet-level Task Force in 2002. The strategy sets forth three objectives; namely (a) strengthening of conservation, (b) restoration of nature, and (c) enhancement of sustainable use.

We are now preparing for legislation to cope with alien species. At the same time, the government is intensively working to mitigate the impacts of certain alien species in the hotspots.

### **3. International Cooperation**

Now I would like to introduce the progress on the international cooperation in this region.

#### (1)Acid Deposition / Dust and Sandstorms (DSS)

The Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) started in 2001 with the participation of relevant countries in this region. Japan would like to continue to commit itself to this Network. I am pleased to share with you that the Intergovernmental Meeting of EANET is scheduled for this week in Bangkok to discuss important issues including future financial arrangement. I wish this Meeting a successful outcome on these subjects.

In regard to dust and sandstorm (DSS), we are updated of this issue through the Symposium of this morning. I am grateful that the ADB-GEF project on DSS in Northeast Asia started last April with the participation of four countries such as China, Korea, Mongolia and Japan, along with four international organizations including UNEP. Japan would like to continue to support this project as much as possible.

#### (2)Marine Pollution Prevention

It is very important to implement the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) for the conservation of marine environment in this region. For that reason, it is essential that a Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) should be established as soon as possible. Korea and Japan have been working to co-host the RCU for host country agreements with

UNEP. I am pleased to share with you that Japan already signed an agreement on the RCU Toyama office last September.

In regard to the regulation of waste dumping, the 1996 Protocol under the London Convention is likely to enter into force in a couple of years. In light of this, Japan is preparing for necessary amendment of current regulations to ratify the Protocol.

(3)Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Japan ratified this Convention in August 2002 and is now developing the national implementation plan required by the Convention. We organized the East Asia POPs Monitoring Workshop to discuss how to monitor POPs contamination in this region.

(4)Local Governments' Initiatives

It is noted that local governments play an important role in developing international cooperation.

The Association of Local Governments in North East Asia Region (NEAR) is a good example. The Association consists of 36 local governments from six (6) countries in this region. The Association organized the international symposium on organic waste management in Korea last year. Another symposium was recently held in Russia to discuss river water quality. We are pleased to welcome these initiatives taken by local governments, who have experienced in overcoming serious environmental pollution.

#### **4. Conclusion**

As I have stated, Japan has made remarkable progress in developing environmental policies as you have in your county. However, we still have many agenda in front of us to achieve sustainable development.

In this region, I believe that we have common ground to address environmental issues. Therefore, I would like to underline the importance of the regional-wide cooperation among countries gathering here for this Conference.

Finally, I would like to conclude my presentation by wishing the conference a fruitful outcome through our active interactions.

Thank you.