

# JEQ

JAPAN Environment Quarterly

In order to realize sustainable societies, the formation of a sound material-cycle society through promotion of the 3Rs is essential. Particularly from the viewpoint of addressing marine plastic litter, which has received increasing attention in recent years, the global expansion of initiatives to form sound material-cycle societies is an issue of utmost importance. This volume will introduce Japan's initiatives, both domestic activities and international partnerships and cooperation, focusing on the formation of sound material-cycle societies and measures to address marine plastic litter.

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## Establishing a sound material-cycle society and measures to address marine litter



# Establishing a sound material-cycle society in Japan

This article will introduce the 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, approved by Cabinet decision in June 2018, laid out by the government to promote measures related to the establishment of a sound material-cycle society in an integrated and systematic manner.

## The 4th Fundamental Plan for a Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society

Japan aims to establish a sound material-cycle society, where consumption of natural resources is controlled and impacts on the environment are mitigated as much as possible based on suppressed generation of waste and proper cyclical use and disposal of waste. To this end, the Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society was formulated based on the Basic Act on Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society which stipulates the basic principle that management of recyclable resources to achieve this type of society should be carried out in the following order: reduce (1st), reuse (2nd), recycle (3rd), thermal recovery (4th) and proper disposal (5th). Accordingly, related measures have been promoted in an integrated and systematic manner. The 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, approved by Cabinet decision in June 2018, based on a review of the present situation, will continue to put emphasis on the core items set forth in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, such as forming a sound material-cycle society focusing on quality, and integrated initiatives to form low-carbon societies and nature coexistence societies, while further broadening its scope to include economic and societal aspects.

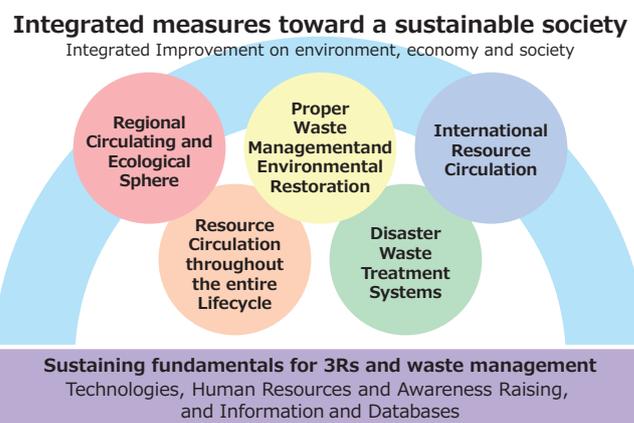
As a course of action, we will first create a vision for the future based on 1) “Integrated measures toward a sustainable society”, including the integration of economic and social aspects. Next, we will create a vision for the future to which our country can aspire, based on the following: 2) “Regional Circulating and Ecological Sphere”\*, 3) “Resource circulation throughout the entire lifecycle”, 4) Proper waste management and environmental restoration”, 5) “Disaster waste treatment systems” and 6) “International resource circulation”. We will further create a future vision for 7) “Sustaining fundamentals for 3Rs and waste management,” to support the other aspects. The measures devised to attain these visions for the future are indicated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society which Japan should implement by approximately 2025.

## The 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society

### The Fundamental Plan

- The Plan is formulated based on the Basic Act on Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society (established in 2000).
- It sets a mid-to long-term direction for the establishment of a sound material-cycle society in Japan, and indicates measures to be implemented in a strategic manner.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan was approved by the Cabinet on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### Pillars of the 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan



The 4<sup>th</sup> Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society

The establishment of a sound material-cycle society is only possible if actions are taken toward achieving goals. Japan will continue to promote our integrated initiatives in the future to build sustainable societies based on this new plan.

\* The sphere that each region demonstrates its strengths by utilizing its unique characteristics, thereby building a self-reliant and decentralized society where different resources are circulated within each region, leading to symbiosis and exchange with neighboring regions according to the unique characteristics of each region.

### MORE INFORMATION

Sound Material-Cycle Society  
<http://www.env.go.jp/en/recycle/smcs/index.html>



*Wataru Okuyama*

Office for Promotion of Sound Material-Cycle Society  
Environmental Regeneration and Material Cycles Bureau

# Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics

In order to respond to global-scale issues such as the problem of marine plastic debris, Japan will formulate the “Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics” ahead of the G20 next June. The strategy will incorporate both ambitious and effective content for Japan to lead the way in addressing the global issue of plastics.

## Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics

While plastics bring about convenience and benefits to our daily lives, they have also created global problems due to a low rate of effective resource utilization and environmental pollution due to plastics floating out to sea.

Japan has taken a lead in promoting initiatives in the proper treatment of plastics and the 3Rs. In order to move forward as a global leader in measures related to plastics, Japan intends to formulate a “Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics” ahead of the G20 to be hosted by Japan in June. The strategy will incorporate integrated and advanced measures.

Firstly, based on the concept of “3Rs + Renewable”, Japan will advance the following: 1) reduced usage of single-use plastics by “adding value”, 2) thorough separation and collection and cyclical use, and 3) promotion of alternatives such as recycled materials and recyclable resources (e.g. paper, biomass plastics). Further, aiming for zero emissions of marine plastics, Japan will promote exhaustive elimination of illegal dumping, beautification and cleaning activities, curbing of the outflow of microplastics, and collection of articles that drift ashore. Additionally, a powerful “Plastics Smart” campaign will be expanded to promote the “wise use of plastics”.

Secondly, the following ambitious and world-leading “milestones” will be established: i) cumulative 25% reduction in single-use plastics by 2030; ii) reusable/recyclable design for all containers and packaging/products by 2025; iii) 60% rate of recycling for containers and packaging by 2030; iv) 100% effective utilization of used plastics by 2035 including circular economy measures; v) doubling use of recycled material by 2030; and, vi) maximum introduction (about 2 million tons) of biomass plastics by 2030. By working in cooperation with citizens in every sector and on every level, Japan will make the necessary investments and promote innovation to achieve these milestones.

## Milestones

### <Reduce>

1. Cumulative 25% reduction in single-use plastics emissions by 2030

### <Reuse/Recycle>

2. Reusable/recyclable design by 2025
3. 60% rate of recycling/reusing for containers and packaging by 2030
4. 100% effective utilization of used plastics by 2035

### <Use of recycled material/biomass plastic>

5. Doubled use of recycled material by 2030
6. Approximate 2 million ton introduction of biomass plastics by 2030

Milestones toward actualizing the Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics

Thirdly, Japan must work to export customized packages of both our soft and hard infrastructures including experiences, technologies and know how, depending on the respective stage of development and circumstances of other countries.

Based on development of this strategy, Japan will achieve solutions to domestic issues involving resources and the environment while serving as a role model for the world. Likewise, Japan will simultaneously address multiple global issues including marine plastics and climate change, and make a maximum contribution to sustainable economic development, while contributing to new growth, including economic growth and creation of employment through the development of industries related to resource circulation.

*Momoe Teraishi*

Recycling Promotion  
Environment Regeneration and Material Cycles Bureau

# Revision of the Basic Policy on the Comprehensive and Effective Promotion of Measures Against Articles that Drift Ashore

Further promotion of measures to address marine litter

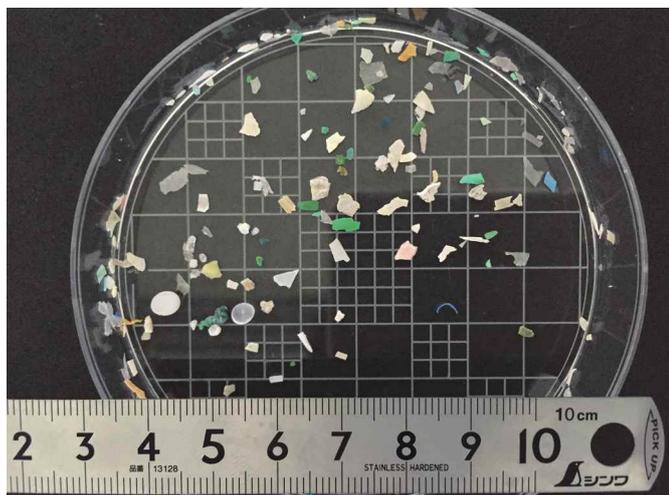
This article will introduce discussions on revision of the Basic Policy on the Comprehensive and Effective Promotion of Measures Against Articles that Drift Ashore (approved by Cabinet Decision on 30 March 2010, hereinafter referred to as the “Basic Policy”) based on the amendment of the Act on Promoting the Treatment of Marine Debris Affecting the Conservation of Good Coastal Landscapes and Environments to Protect Natural Beauty and Variety (Act No. 82 of 2009, hereinafter referred to as the “Act on Promoting the Treatment of Articles that Drift Ashore”).



## Background of revision of the Basic Policy

To protect our country's coastal environment and natural beauty, Japan has promoted measures to address marine litter based on the Act on Promoting the Treatment of Articles that Drift Ashore and the Basic Policy.

Nevertheless, ten years after the enforcement of the Act, large amounts of litter continue to drift ashore onto Japan's coastline, originating from both inside Japan and overseas, and these have serious impacts on the marine environment. In recent years, microplastics have drawn attention around the world for their potential impacts on ecosystems. Marine litter has become a global issue that must be addressed on a global scale. Additionally, discussions on the issue of marine litter have taken place in forums such as the G7 and G20, as recognition of the need for international partnerships and cooperation has risen.



Microplastics (photo provided by Isobe Research Laboratory of Kyushu University)

## Outline of the revision of the Basic Policy

In consideration of these circumstances, the Act on Promoting the Treatment of Articles that Drift Ashore was revised in June 2018 with unanimous approval in the diet. Following the amendment of the Act, the Ministry of the Environment formulated a draft revision of the Basic Policy, which is currently undergoing review in the Expert Meeting on Measures against Articles that Drift Ashore.

The revision aims to strengthen measures to address marine litter and would add items including: 1) promotion of the treatment of floating litter and seabed litter, 2) formation of a sound material-cycle society based on the 3Rs, 3) reducing microplastics which flow into the ocean, 4) securing multi-stakeholder partnerships and raising awareness through education, and 5) securing global partnerships and promoting international cooperation.

Japan will continue to further discussions on the revision of the Basic Policy in advance of the G20 to be held in Japan in 2019 and to carry out initiatives to promote measures to address marine litter.

*Kohei Suzuki*

### Section Chief

Office of Marine Environment, Water Environment Division  
Environmental Management Bureau

# Utilization of Energy from Waste

The fundamental principles of the Basic Act on Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society stipulate that reduction of waste generation should be carried out first, followed by reuse, and then recycling. Likewise, energy should be recovered for waste which must be incinerated. Moreover, the 4<sup>th</sup> Basic Plan on Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society and the Waste Treatment Facility Development Plan stipulate that general waste treatment facilities should create new value for communities and function as community energy centers. This article will introduce initiatives related to energy utilization at mainly general waste treatment facilities.

## Utilization of energy from waste

General waste treatment facilities carry out appropriate and dependable treatment of general waste during normal times as well as throughout disasters, and serve as crucial pieces of social infrastructure that provide the foundation for regional development to support regional resource circulation. Concurrently, they are expected to function as independent and decentralized regional energy centers, both for climate change measures and during disasters, through the advancement of energy recovery and heat utilization from high-efficiency power generation utilizing the excess heat generated during incineration (Figure 1). Japan will continue in the future to promote utilization of energy from waste based on initiatives like those described below.

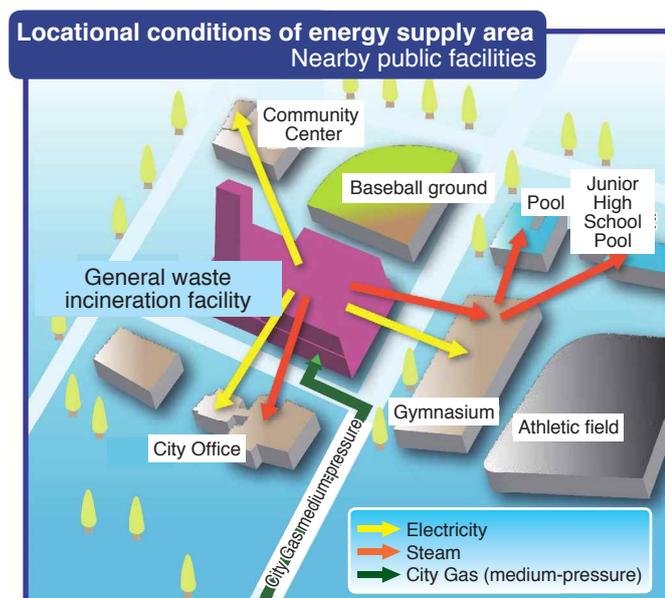


Figure 1: Example of utilization of energy from waste

efficiency energy recovery and structural enhancements to cope with disaster waste treatment, and will prioritize support for upgrades and improvements to facilities with the potential for high-efficiency energy recovery and supply. By converting these facilities into infrastructure that can accept disaster waste from a region after the occurrence of a large-scale disaster, then recover the energy generated in the treatment of the disaster waste with high efficiency, thereby supplying electricity and heat to public facilities and evacuation centers, the ministry will be supporting the resiliency of waste treatment systems.

### 2) Energy Measures Special Account

The Ministry of the Environment, in an effort to strengthen measures to address global warming in the solid waste sector, implements a program entitled, “model projects on low-carbon communities based on utilization of excess heat from waste incineration facilities” that provides subsidies to private companies and local governments for projects involving feasibility studies and equipment installation. Regional low-carbon model projects utilizing excess heat from waste incineration facilities serve as part of efforts to promote studies, verification and results of greenhouse gas reduction measures utilizing the energy measures special account.



Image of general waste incineration facility

## Promoting utilization of energy from waste

### 1) Grant for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society

The Ministry of the Environment will target facilities that carry out comprehensive initiatives to invest in both high-

*Koji Kikuchi*

Waste Management Division  
Environmental Regeneration and Material Cycles Bureau

The Plastics Smart Campaign was developed to promote the “wise use of plastics” based on collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders toward solving the problem of marine plastic waste. The campaign will disseminate information on best practices both in Japan and overseas.

## The Plastics Smart Campaign

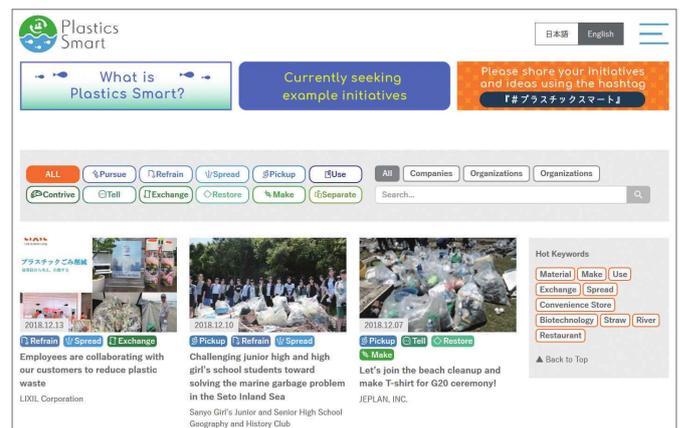
Concerns have risen over serious impacts on marine ecosystems due to increased pollution on a global scale from massive amounts of plastic floating in the oceans. In order to address this issue, a wide range of stakeholders, including individuals, local governments, NGOs and companies, must come together under one banner to engage in collaborative initiatives.

Accordingly, the Plastics Smart Campaign was launched in October 2018 to promote “wise use of plastics” across the country, beginning with the eradication of littering, and the reduced use and extensive separation and collection of unnecessary single-use plastics.

Specifically, the campaign is calling on local governments, NGOs, companies and research institutes to submit applications on the campaign website (<http://plastics-smart.env.go.jp/>) for initiatives to address the issue. Targeted initiatives range from campaigns to eradicate littering and illegal dumping, collection of scattered litter or articles that drift ashore, reduction of single-use plastics, events that employ reusable tableware and development/use of products that utilize alternative materials such as recycled materials and paper or biomass plastic. Information on registered initiatives will be released on social media, at the World Economic Forum, and at the G20 that will be held in Japan this June.

The campaign is also calling upon individuals to share their photos and comments on social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) with the hashtag “#plasticssmart”. Posts can include participation in clean-up events, efforts to reduce single-use plastics based on use of reusable shopping bags or water bottles, or the purchase of environmentally-friendly products.

Plans are also in place for the establishment of a “Plastics Smart Forum” to promote dialogue and interaction among various stakeholders on initiatives to address the issue.



Website of Plastics Smart

As explained above, Japan intends to contribute to solving the global problem of marine plastic waste by sharing our country’s best practices in Japan and around the world. The campaign is intended serve as a resource to stakeholders engaging in related initiatives. We encourage you to actively make contact with the registered local governments, NGOs, companies and research institutions and deepen dialogue and networking for further actions.

### MORE INFORMATION

Plastics Smart  
<http://plastics-smart.env.go.jp/en/>



*Yuichiro Iseki*

### Section Chief

Recycling Promotion  
Environment Regeneration And Material Cycles Bureau

# ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative

At the ASEAN+3 Summit held on Thursday, 15 November 2018, Prime Minister Abe made a proposal for the ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative to reduce plastics in the oceans, which was welcomed by other countries. This article will provide a summary of this initiative.

In recent years, the problem of marine plastic debris has come to be considered an urgent issue that demands engagement based on cooperation by countries around the world. Moreover, based on estimations of the high outflow of marine plastic litter from Southeast Asian nations, Japan has examined the need for a cooperation scheme in the area of marine plastic debris targeting the ASEAN region.

Accordingly, meetings and events on the topic of marine debris have been held in ASEAN countries on several occasions, and the need for a regional action to address marine debris has been confirmed. Likewise, based on the need for concrete action to address the issue of marine plastic debris, a Leaders' Statement on marine debris was adapted among the nations of the East Asia Summit (EAS) at the summit held in November 2018. On the same day, Japan proposed the "ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative" to provide support for ASEAN on the implementation of EAS Leaders' Statement with cooperation of China and Korea. As the background of this initiative, the three countries of Japan, China and Korea confirmed their continued cooperation on the issue, as well as joint support by the three nations for other countries, at the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM).

This initiative will provide support to ASEAN countries in capacity building on the 3Rs and solid waste management, as well as infrastructure improvements. Further, support will be carried out for formulation of national action plans by ASEAN nations. Additionally, the initiative will work to raise awareness among local governments, companies and citizens involved in the issue of marine plastic debris, and to advance regional cooperation to enhance and share scientific knowledge on the issue.

The focus of Japan's support that is already underway includes creation of collection systems for waste, introduction of rules on separation and introduction of waste to energy infrastructure, and Japan intends continue to further enhance these activities. Further, plans are in place to implement capacity building for

## Overview of the "ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative"

The following activities of the initiative will provide support for ASEAN nations based on cooperation by Japan, China and Korea, and will promote cooperation in the region.

- 1. Promotion of the 3Rs and waste treatment**
  - Capacity building on waste treatment systems
  - Knowledge sharing through the Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific
- 2. Promotion of awareness-raising and research on marine debris**
  - Awareness raising among local governments, companies and citizens
  - Enhancement of marine debris monitoring capacity including the introduction of a congruent method
  - Accumulation of scientific knowledge on distribution of marine debris
  - Knowledge sharing on the various activities and research of national governments
- 3. Strengthened regional and international cooperation**
  - Establishment of a knowledge hub
  - Support for formulation of national action plans in ASEAN nations

Overview of the ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative

monitoring of marine debris and knowledge-sharing on the development of innovative alternative materials.

Japan will continue to advance our cooperative relationship with ASEAN nations through the activities of this initiative.

*Tadasuke Arahori*

### Section Chief

International Cooperation and Sustainable Infrastructure Office  
Global Environmental Bureau

# Africa Clean Cities Platform (ACCP)

Aspiring to realize “clean and healthy cities”



This article will introduce the Africa Clean Cities Platform (ACCP), which was established by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the City of Yokohama, towards realizing clean and healthy cities in Africa.



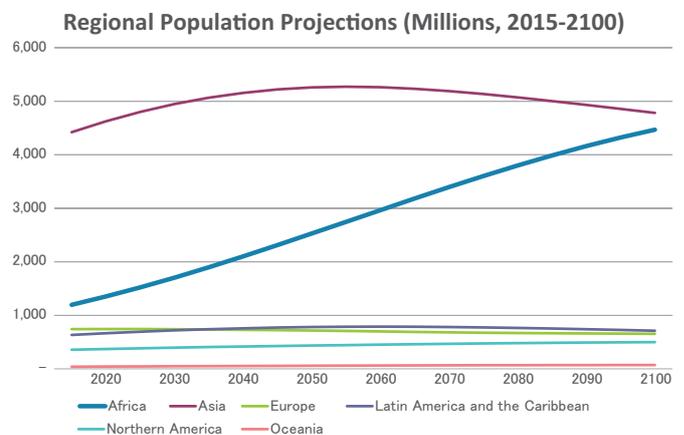
A city, landfill and people foraging for waste

## Africa's economic development and population increase bring about intensified waste problems

Economic growth and rapid urban population increase in Africa have intensified problems surrounding waste. Africa's current population of 1.25 billion will double to reach 2.5 billion in 2050, and it is also projected to continue to increase. With populations increasingly concentrating in cities, initiatives to improve urban living environments are urgently required to ensure healthy lives for people and ongoing sustainable growth in the future. International goals on solid waste management were first established in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (target 11.6 and targets 12.3, 4 and 5) adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Countries around the world, including Japan and those in Africa, are working to find solutions to problems.

## Establishment and the objective of the Africa Clean Cities Platform (ACCP)

Against the background of the intensifying waste problem, a side event entitled, “Toward Clean and Healthy Cities in Africa”, was held as follow-up to the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-VI) in Nairobi, Kenya, in August



Regional Population Projections (from United Nations materials)

2016. The need for knowledge on the problem of waste in Africa, as well as the promotion of SDGs, were acknowledged at the conference. Accordingly, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, JICA, UNEP, UN-Habitat and the City of Yokohama, garnering the support of 24 governments of African nations and cities, established the Africa Clean Cities Platform (ACCP) in Maputo, Mozambique, in April 2017.

The ACCP is to serve as a base for supporting countries and cities in discovering and implementing steps and measures to carry out proper waste management and achieve the SDGs. ACCP will



Target 11.6	By2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
Target 12.5	By2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

SDGs: Goals and main targets concerning waste

promote public and private sector investment in an aim to realize “clean and healthy cities” in Africa by 2030, the target year of the SDGs, based on sharing of information and experience related to municipal solid waste among African countries, capacity building for human resources and organizations, and provision and application of guidelines on best practices.

### Concrete activities of ACCP: Initiatives in knowledge sharing, networking and capacity building

Since its establishment in April 2017, ACCP has promoted information sharing and opinion exchange on knowledge and experience in waste management and SDG-related initiatives in Africa at various meetings and events, including a side event at the TICAD ministerial meeting held in August 2017 (Maputo, Mozambique), the 1st Annual Meeting in June 2018 (Rabat, Morocco) and a side event at the TICAD ministerial meeting in October 2018 (Yokohama, Japan). Likewise, ACCP has promoted networking among African nations, international organizations, private companies and financial institutions. Further, the ACCP launched a website and Facebook page which are operated as tools for information sharing/dissemination and networking.

Capacity building is essential for the improvement of waste management in countries in Africa. Accordingly, JICA and the City of Yokohama played a central role in implementing a training programme in Yokohama, Japan, aimed at improving capacity in policy and planning on waste management and enhancing technical knowledge,

targeted at government officials working in the area of waste management in African countries. To date, two trainings have been held in English, and a training in French is scheduled for February 2019, targeting French-speaking nations. Moreover, an on-site training was held in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) in December 2018, involving a study tour on landfills that utilize the Fukuoka Method, a Japanese landfill disposal technology. Such efforts to engage in more practical capacity building in waste management will be continued.

### Future initiatives for clean and healthy cities in Africa

With the rising importance of waste management in Africa, members of the ACCP have also grown to include 35 countries and 63 cities (as of November 2018), and are expected to further increase. If clean cities in Africa can be achieved based on proper collection and transportation, intermediate processing and final disposal of solid waste by nations and cities according to their respective situations, not only will public health and the environment be improved, but positive economic impacts, such as the promotion of investments and tourism, can also be expected.

The ACCP 2nd Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held in conjunction with TICAD 7 in Yokohama in August 2019. The Ministry of the Environment will continue to work in close cooperation with African nations, JICA, the City of Yokohama, UNEP and UN-Habitat to further advance activities to realize “clean and healthy cities” in Africa.



Training on waste management (Yokohama)



ACCP 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting (Rabat)

#### MORE INFORMATION

African Clean Cities Platform  
<http://africancleancities.org/>



*Shigemitsu Tanaka*

#### Senior Environment Expert

Office for Promotion of Sound Material-Cycle Society  
 Environmental Regeneration and Material Cycles Bureau

# Outcomes of the World Circular Economy Forum 2018

From linear economy to circular economy



In October, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the Finnish Innovation Fund jointly organized the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2018. A total of 64 countries were represented with over 1,000 people participating in the event, where discussions on forming a circular economy were held.

## Transition from linear to circular economy

The socioeconomic model of the 20th century, based on mass production, mass consumption and mass disposal, has resulted in a scarcity of resources and the generation of massive amounts of greenhouse gases. This model has already reached its limits, and a new socioeconomic model is required to achieve sustainable development. A transition from the conventional “linear” economy model based on wasting massive quantities of natural resources, to a “circular” economy model based on long-term repeated use of resources and minimization of waste, is imperative.

The world is steadily moving towards a circular economy. In 2015, the EU released its “Circular Economy Package”, and the “Toyama Framework on Material Cycles” was adopted at the G7 Environment Ministers’ Meeting in 2016.

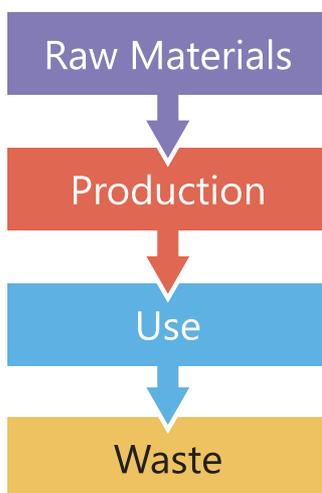


Opening speech by Yoshiaki Harada, Japan's Minister of the Environment

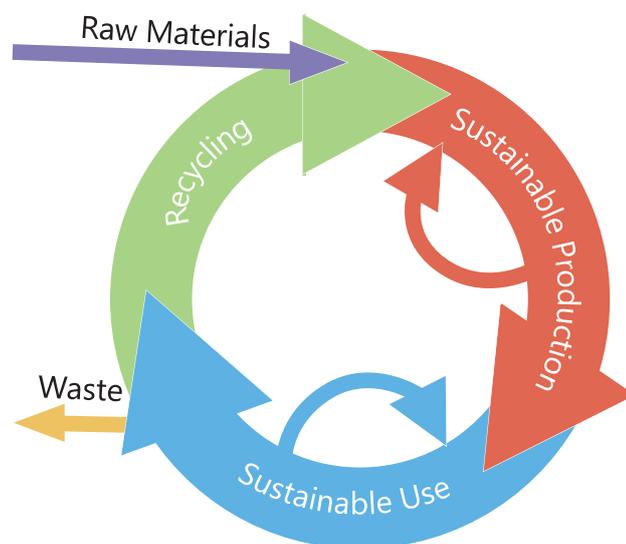
## Overview and outcome of the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2018

The WCEF was held for the first time in 2017 in Helsinki, Finland. The second WCEF2018 was held in Yokohama on 22-23 October.

### Liner Economy



### Circular Economy



From linear economy to circular economy

Lively discussions took place among government officials from 64 nations and representatives from international organizations, business leaders and experts, totaling over 1,000 participants.

Specific topics included: circular economy and economic benefits, addressing energy and climate change issues, circular economy and trade, transportation of the future, and reducing plastic waste in the oceans. Best practices from around the world related to circular economy were introduced.

The meeting confirmed a transition to a circular economy to be imperative if global issues such as sustainable development are to be addressed.

The Government of Japan made three proposals toward realizing a circular economy.

(1) Setting and sharing of specific goals by each country, company and individual

Specific goals are indispensable to share a vision to transform to a circular economy and work to realize this vision. Everyone must focus on a circular economy as a key concept and move in the same direction. Based on an understanding of the roles of our economies and societies, we must set and act upon goals.

(2) Raise the international momentum for building a circular economy

In order to build a new socioeconomic system and move away from being locked into a linear economy, each individual must understand the need for a transition to a circular economy. Likewise, in order to link this understanding to concrete actions, effective education and publicity campaigns are crucial. By working together to build momentum, we can accelerate the transition to a circular economy.

(3) Expanded collaboration between public and private sectors

In order to create a circular economy, efforts must be expanded both in public and private sectors based on collaboration.

The governments of each country must do more than just hoist up a flag to lead the way in the transition to a circular economy. Harnessing the power of the private sector based on public-private cooperation and stimulating voluntary actions in the private sector are key.

In an effort to contribute to the creation of a circular society through sharing information on Japanese private companies' technologies and initiatives with others around the world, the Ministry of the Environment announced its participation in the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy



Scene at the World Circular Economy Forum

(PACE), an initiative of the World Economic Forum, at WCEF2018.

## Activities to create a circular economy

Japan will be the G20 Chair next year. It will utilize this opportunity to introduce “resource efficiency” and “marine litter” to the agenda of the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth. Likewise, Japan will bring the output of WCEP 2018 to various conferences, including the Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific, held annually since 2009, and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA4), to raise the momentum toward creating a circular economy.

Cooperation between the public and private sector is extremely important to bring about an unfaltering momentum. Through actively utilizing platforms such as the World Circular Economy Forum and the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy, the public and private sectors must come together to advance initiatives. Although companies which initiate actions for the transition to a circular economy can raise their competitiveness and advantages on a long-term basis, it is essential for government to support their transition. It is necessary for government to create an institutional system where companies are evaluated properly and get rewarded for investments when they disclose information on their activities which comply with a circular economy.

Japan will continue to exhibit strong leadership into the future towards the creation of a circular economy.

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*Yoshifumi Miyake*

**Senior Environment Expert**

Office for Promotion of Sound Material-Cycle Society  
Environmental Regeneration and Material Cycles Bureau

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# An Introduction to Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture



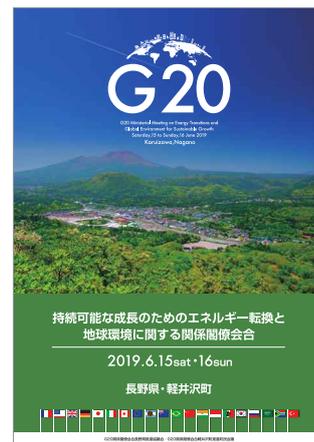
The “Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth” will be held in Karuizawa, Nagano Prefecture on the 15th and 16th of June 2019. The meeting will focus on themes on marine plastic pollution and establishment of a sound material-cycle society. This article will introduce the town of Karuizawa.

## An Overview of Karuizawa

Located at the eastern end of Nagano Prefecture on the border with Gunma Prefecture, the town of Karuizawa is on a plateau that stretches at an altitude ranging from 900 to 1,000 meters along the southeast slope of Mt. Asama (altitude 2,468 meters).

The town enjoys a rich natural environment including Mt. Asama and other mountains, lakes, marshes and waterfalls. Canadian missionary Alexander Croft Shaw, who visited Karuizawa in 1886, was impressed with the splendid nature and dubbed the town a “hospital without a roof”.

Since the first summer home was built in 1888, the town has developed as an international health resort to become one of Japan's leading vacation spots.



## Shiraito Falls



Falling from cliff walls at a height of 3 meters, and stretching 70 meters across, the abundant underground water flowing down the falls does indeed resemble “white thread”, true to the meaning of its Japanese name. The area is filled with pure water and negative ions from the forest.

## Former Mikasa Hotel



Photo provided by the Nagano Tourism Association

Designed and built by Japanese craftsmen, the wooden structure of the Former Mikasa Hotel was built in pure Western style in the late Meiji Era. Its façade today is a reminder of the distinguished persons of the Meiji and Taisho eras that visited the hotel. The hotel was designated as an important cultural property in May of 1980.

### MORE INFORMATION

Karuizawa, Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth  
<https://www.japan.go.jp/g20japan/karuizawa.html>



## Suguru Saskurai

International Strategy Division  
Global Environment Bureau