

Japan Environment Quarterly

News from the
Environment Agency

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Message from Director General Michiko Ishii

As global warming and other modern environmental problems have come to the fore and endanger the earth, the basis of our very existence, Japan has recognized its important task to support international initiatives to solve these problems. 1997 will be a milestone, the fifth year since the Earth Summit, and the year of the Special Session of the United Nations Assembly on the Environment and the Kyoto Conference on Global Warming (the Third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). In particular, since an international framework for measures to combat global warming in the 21st century is expected to result in the Kyoto Conference in December, it is no exaggeration to say that this year is a crucial year for the global environment and the future of humanity. Most environmental problems occurring these days are the result of normal business activities and everyday lifestyles of people. In order to solve the problems, we must identify unsustainable socio-

economic systems and lifestyles and find alternatives to them, in order to create societies which put a minimal burden on the environment and which can develop sustainably. From this perspective, as Director General of the Environment Agency, I will strive to promote sound environmental administration. In

(cont'd pg.2, Message)

Japan Proposes Climate Change Protocol

The Government of Japan tabled a proposal for a new Protocol to arrest global warming at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on Berlin Mandate in Geneva, in December 1996. At the "Kyoto Conference" in December this year — the Third Conference of the Parties (COP3) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) — countries will adopt a Protocol after debating various proposals. Included in Japan's draft Protocol was the basic recognition that (1) ultimately a reduction in CO₂ emissions to less than 50% of current levels is necessary, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded in its Second Report; and (2) many developed countries

(cont'd pg.2, Climate)



(from pg.1, Message)

particular, I hope that the Kyoto Conference will succeed in adopting effective measures to protect the environment, and be an opportunity to encourage a review of Japan's domestic action plans to prevent global warming and to radically strengthen Japanese policies. In addition, I attach particular emphasis on addressing global and regional environmental issues in the Asia Pacific region, such as preservation of biodiversity and marine

environments. We are also taking the initiative in the region to promote regional cooperation, and our preparation for establishment of an International Institute for Strategic Study on the Global Environment is one such initiative. Japan Environment Quarterly introduces the Environment Agency's international activities. I hope that readers will find it useful to learn about and consider ways we can all cooperate and be effective in facing our common

challenges.

(from pg.1, Climate)

must make greater efforts to reduce their CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. In addition, Japan proposed that countries could choose to reduce either per capita emissions or aggregate emissions of CO₂, in order to combat global warming after 2000: (1) countries could reduce average annual emissions over 5 years from a certain starting year to below 'P' tonnes per capita; or (2) they could reduce emissions over 5 years from a certain starting year to 'Q' percent below 1990 levels, where the figures for both "p" and "q" are indifferent to all Annex-I countries. The proposal points out that the objective is to choose an approach in which as many countries as possible can agree to environmentally effective and fair targets, while considering differences between countries, such as their current energy situations and possibilities of reduction in terms of CO₂ emissions. The Japanese proposal specifies appropriate policies and measures

that can be used to achieve the quantified objective in five fields, including improving efficiency of energy use. A list of areas was listed in a separate annex. In the annex, Japan includes the ideas of indicators which should be set internationally to measure the effectiveness of policies and measures, and developed countries shall establish voluntary goals for each indicator.

In addition, the proposed Protocol would require developed countries to regularly report publicly on their progress in achieving targets as well as on results of policies and measures. The Convention Secretariat would monitor the country reports and ensure that countries experiencing difficulties would receive recommendations from Conferences of the Parties.

RECENT CLIMATE INITIATIVE IN JAPAN

In December last year the Environment Agency's High-Level Task Force to promote National Actions for Better Climate compiled the 'Basic Policy on

Citizen-Level Awareness and Citizen Participation to Strengthen Efforts to Combat Global Warming' and 'Status Report on Citizen-Level Awareness and Citizen Participation Efforts to Combat Global Warming.' The Task Force, headed by Ms. Michiko Ishii, Director General of the Environment Agency, was created on 1 December 1996, one year in advance of the Kyoto Conference on climate change. The Objectives of the Task Force are to coordinate departments within the Agency and to strengthen its efforts to combat global warming; and to inform the public of the urgency and need for action. The Policy was created in recognition of the role of citizen's movement in the success of the Kyoto Conference, and the need for initiatives by local governments and citizen organizations to combat global warming. The Task Force will promote active debate, call for extensive actions, collect information on them and report to the public.

Climate Forum Kicks Off with Movement for Citizens' Participation in COP3

The "Climate Forum Citizen's Meeting to Prevent Climate Change and Global Warming" was launched on December 1, 1996 in Kyoto, by 36 environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all parts of Japan. The Climate

Forum is a network of Japanese citizen and NGO groups who consider environmental problems from the viewpoint of consumer lifestyles, women's issues, and other social phenomena. To increase NGO participation in policy decision processes, the Climate Forum plans to set up a forum for dialogue running parallel to the inter-governmental meetings during COP3 (Third Conference of the Parties of the

Framework Convention on Climate Change) which will be held in December in Kyoto. Director General of the Environment Agency, Michiko Ishii addressed the meeting, welcoming participants and stressing the importance of citizen participation. See Homepage at <http://geic.or.jp/kiko-forum/>

APN Workshop on Human Dimensions of Global Change

The APN / START / SASCOM / GCTE Workshop on Human Dimensions Issues in the Asia Pacific region relating to global environmental change was held in New Delhi on 20-23 January. Participants from 17 countries in the region, and international organizations supporting global change research gathered for the workshop. In recent years, the ability of natural scientists to measure, monitor and predict changes in the global environment has advanced greatly with the use of modern technologies such as remote sensing satellites. However, the social sciences and humanities have not been fully involved in this process. For this reason, the scientific community has shown an interest in integrating social science and natural science approaches to help understand global-scale change.

Moreover, the rapid economic and population growth in the Asia Pacific region is affecting the ecosystems and societies not only in this region, but on a global scale. At the same time, changes in the global environment will have serious implications for ecosystems and societies in the Asia Pacific region. It was in this context that the workshop on human dimensions was held. One of the unique goals of the workshop was to provide opportunities for both natural and

social scientists to share their respective information and views with each other, and with governmental delegates concerned about policies needed to respond to environmental changes.

Three working groups concentrated on food security issues; vulnerability of people to changes in freshwater supplies and declining water quality and threats to health resulting from global changes; and scientific support

strengthening of the human dimensions elements of LUCC. There was also recognition in the food security context that additional work would be required on the relationship of the monsoon, global change, and factors affecting food production. (IHDP is a programme sponsored by the International Social Sciences Council (ISSC) and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU).) Furthermore, it was also



for policy makers. The workshop resulted in recommendations for continuous support for the regional work being developed within the framework of the land use and land cover change (LUCC) programme jointly organized by the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) and International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP), and for

recommended that the APN consider supporting attendance of researchers in the APN region at the IHDP Human Dimensions open meeting in Austria in June 1997. It was also recommended that the APN consider to support having the next open meeting in the region in 1999. In addition, some activities recommended at the workshop included cooperation between
(cont'd pg.6, APN)

ISO 14000 Environmental Standards in Japan

Japan is taking steps to adapt the Japan Industrial Standards (JIS) to comply with the new ISO (International Organization of Standards) 14000 series of standards for environmental management system and environmental auditing, which came into effect September 1 and October 1, 1996, respectively. The Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB) is responsible for authorizing 'certification/registration bodies' for ISO 14001 and other standards. By December, already 8 organizations, including Japan Audit and Certification Organization for the Environment (JACO), were applying to JAB for ISO 14001 registration. JAB will also be responsible for certification and registration of organizations which train and certify environmental auditors.

The new 14000 series of standards introduces a comprehensive systems-based approach which can be used by organizations and businesses to manage the environmental impact of their activities. They provide guidelines on elements of environmental management systems, including environmental labeling and life cycle analysis, and on environmental

20% Club for Sustainable Cities

Representatives of 26 local authorities from 21 countries overseas, and 58 local authorities in Japan met from January 27-29 in Kanagawa for the inauguration of the 20% Club for Sustainable Cities which aims to promote international cooperation among local authorities. To join the 20% Club, local government authorities — such as cities, towns, village authorities, and associations of such organizations — declare their intentions to achieve 20% reductions in environmental burdens or 20% increases in environmental improvements within approximately 5 years. The targets are understood to be approximate and non-binding. The meeting, attended by heads of environmental policy sections, was co-hosted by the Environment Agency and Kanagawa Prefecture, and supported by U.N. Development Program, U.N. Environment Program, and International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

Members select at least one environmental issue, depending on local priorities, set numerical targets to guide actions, and strive to formulate and implement

comprehensive environmental management plans. Five areas chosen for work were (1) reduction of household wastes, (2) increase in greenery, (3) increase in environmentally sound traffic, (4) reduction of industrial pollutant emissions, and (5) reduction of CO₂ emissions.

Here are some examples of plans. Gumma Prefecture of Japan aims to reduce per capita CO₂ emissions to 1990 levels by 2010 and increase resource recovery from waste by 20% by 2005. Setagaya Ward in Tokyo aims to increase the recycling rate by 30% within 3 years. Newcastle, Australia aims to reduce CO₂ emissions by 5% from 1990 levels by the 2000, and reduce landfill waste volume by 50% from 1990 levels by 2000. Central Jakarta, Indonesia, aims to reduce waste from 5,200 cu m/day now to 4,000 cu m/day by 2002. Puerto Princessa, Philippines aims to eliminate destructive fishing methods. Matara, Sri Lanka aims to produce 30 tonnes per day of organic fertilizer by composting, and earn income from it. Gulu, Uganda aims to increase bicycle use by 80% and public transportation by 60%.



Members will be kept in contact by a newsletter, distribution of case studies, and a homepage on the Internet. By February 40 local authorities had joined the 20% Club, and 9 more have expressed intention to join. The Club is still accepting members. The Secretariat for the 20% Club is c/o Global Environmental Forum, Iikura Building, 1-9-7 Azabudai, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106, Japan, Tel +81-3-5561-9735, Fax +81-3-5561-9737.

aspects for product standards. The ISO 14000 series of standards are generic and applicable to both service and manufacturing industries, public and private sectors, and will provide an international benchmark for evaluating environmental performance of organizations.

Japanese companies have watched developments of the ISO 14000 series closely and many are planning to obtain ISO 14001 registration, which they see as becoming essential to succeed, especially in international markets.



Mayors Hold Environmental Summit

Mayors of twelve government-ordained cities of Japan met in Kitakyushu City on January 19th for “Environmental Summit of Designated Cities Japan 1997” to discuss policies and initiatives needed by Japan’s big cities in order to protect the urban and global environments in the coming century. It was the first time mayors of these cities gathered to focus on environmental issues. The meeting resulted in adoption of the “Designated Cities Environmental Declaration (Kitkyushu Declaration)” which has two thrusts: creating “sustainable cities” which place minimal burden on the environment, and building partnerships which reach this goal. Along these thrusts, mayors agreed on a wide variety of issues including development of action plans for greening their own operations with numerical targets, determination of carbon dioxide emissions and promoting international cooperation such as technical assistance.

The result of this summit is hoped to be reflected in discussions relating to the forthcoming international conferences such as COP3.

International Coral Reef Initiative(ICRI)

The ICRI Second Regional Workshop for East Asian Seas was held in Okinawa on 16–20 February to strengthen conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs in the region.

Participants, including representatives of countries in the region, institutions, researchers, and citizens' groups heard

progress reports on the East Asian Seas Regional Strategy which was adopted at the first ICRI meeting in Bali last March, discussed coastal management, capacity building, research and monitoring, coordination and implementation, and evaluation mechanisms. The meeting was sponsored by the Environment Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Okinawa Prefecture.

Coral reefs have been called the 'tropical forests of the sea' for

their great biological diversity. They were added as an important item to the Japan-U.S. Common Agenda in May 1994. At the end of May 1995, Japan-U.S.-Australia co-sponsored an 8-country ICRI meeting in the Philippines, which resulted in adoption of a "Call for Action" and "Framework for Action."

Environment Agency Measures to Deal with the Nakhodka Oil Spill Incident

In response to the huge oil spill from the Russian tanker Nakhodka that occurred recently in Japanese territorial waters, the government of Japan took measures in accordance with the "National Contingency Plan for Preparedness and Response for Oil Pollution Incidents," which had been decided upon by the Cabinet in December 1995. The Cabinet Secretary chaired a meeting of Cabinet Ministers, including the Environment Agency Director General, to consider how to cope with the Nakhodka oil spill disaster. As a result, a "Head Office for Countermeasures to the Nakhodka Shipwreck and Oil Spill Disaster"



was established with the Transport Minister in charge. With members including the Director General of the Water Quality Bureau of the Environment Agency, the Head Office held meetings to coordinate measures taken by 18 ministries and agencies. The Environment Agency took charge of developing measures to supervise environmental protection, in particular dispatching experts to the sites affected and conducting rescue operations of wild animals affected by the spill, investigations into the impact on the environment, and operations to remove the oil from national and quasi-national parks.

(from pg.3, APN)

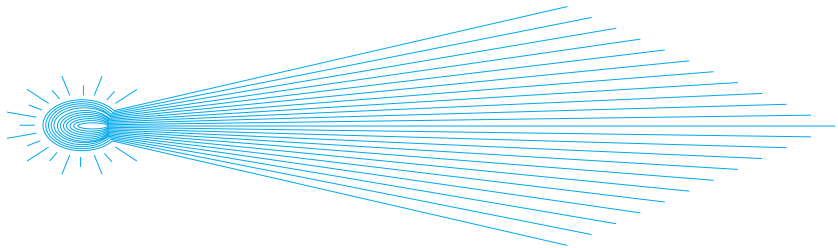
scientific networks in the Asia-Pacific region and the Americas to study the influence of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) on climate; development of capacity of researchers; and creation of a network of specialists to monitor health issues (such as the spread of malaria and dengue fever as climate changes) in the Asia Pacific region. The Workshop was hosted by the Asia Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), Global Change SysTem for Analysis, Research and Training (START), South Asia START Committee (SASCOM), and Global Change and Terrestrial Ecosystems (GCTE). APN was established in 1996 as an inter-governmental network that supports global environmental research to guide countries in the region in policy relating to global environmental change. Japan is currently hosting the Interim Secretariat.

Japan to Turn Lights Down for Comet Visit

Japan's Environment Agency has been encouraging companies and local communities to participate in a planned dimming of outdoor illumination from April 1 to 6 this year, when Hale-Bopp comet is expected to be most visible from the Earth. This comet is exceptionally large and is expected to be several times brighter than the brightest stars, with a tail stretching across 10 degrees of the northwestern sky. The Environment Agency has been distributing pamphlets to municipalities across the nation to promote its "Light-Down" campaign, through which it hopes to raise awareness of light

pollution which reduces stargazers' views. Other benefits of this initiative will be energy conservation and reduction of CO₂ emissions. The Environment Agency will also publicize the names of participating companies and local communities. The nationwide association of pachinko parlors and the publisher

Shogakkan were among the first to sign on. 537 hotels and inns in Atami, a tourist town south of Tokyo, have agreed to turn down their lights, in the hopes of attracting more visitors.



Major English Publications from the Environment Agency

The Action Plan for Greening Government Operations (1995)
The Basic Environment Law (1993)
The Basic Environment Plan-An Outline (1995)
Environmental Protection Policy in Japan (1995)
Harmonizing Environment and Trade Policies (1995)
Nature Conservation in Japan (1995)
National Action Plan for Agenda 21 (1994)
Our Intensive Effort to Overcome the Tragic History of Minamata Disease (1994)
Quality of the Environment in Japan (1994)
Water Environment Management in Japan (1996)

New Homepage for Environment Agency

For Internet surfers, the Environment Agency has opened a Homepage in English. Persons with standard computer hardware and software can now get access in an instant to reports such as the annual Quality of the Environment in Japan, Environmental laws and plans, National Action Plan for Agenda 21, National Strategy of Japan on Biological Diversity, and other papers. Past issues of the Japan Environment Quarterly are also on display. Internet address: <http://www/eic.or.jp>

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NEWLY OPEN



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION CENTRE

The Global Environment Information Centre (GEIC) opened on 29 October 1996 on the ground floor of the United Nations University headquarters building in Shibuya, Tokyo. Founded on the recommendations of the United Nations Agenda 21 and the Tokyo Declaration 1994, which was adopted at the Tokyo Conference on Global Environmental Action, the GEIC is a joint initiative of the United Nations University and the Environment Agency of Japan. The GEIC acts as a centre for:

- * global projects
- * networking among social sectors such as NGOs, the private sector, and the government
- * public information on issues and activities related to the environment

In implementing global projects, the GEIC has its own Homepage (<http://www.geic.or.jp>) and introduces the international trend of environmental policies. By offering a place to communicate with each other for international organizations and NGOs on the Internet, the GEIC also supports the NGO participation in drafting environmental policies globally. In 1997 the GEIC focuses on climate change issues, and promotes: (a) disseminating information, through the Homepage, on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and international trends leading up to the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP3), which will be held in Kyoto this December, and (b) networking among international organizations, including UN-related ones, and both international and domestic NGOs through exchanges on the Internet.

March

- 22-24 Global Partnership Summit on Environment (Tokyo)
- 24-25 Second APN Scientific Planning Group Meeting (Tokyo)
- 26-28 Second APN Inter-Governmental Meeting (Tokyo)
- 30-31 International Conference on Opportunities and Problems of Early Actions for Climate Change (Kyoto)

June

- 23-27 Special Session of United Nations General Assembly (New York)

September

- 7-8 Sixth Environmental Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA '97) (Kobe)

December

- 1-12 Third Conference of the Parties, Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto)

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