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Japanese Position Paper for UN General Assembly Special Session on Environment and Development

The following is the complete text of Japan's position for the UN General Assembly Special Session on Environment and Development to be held in New York on June 23-27. This will be a landmark meeting, bringing together world leaders to review progress since UNCED.

1. Now that five years have passed since the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro, the international community must take steps to ensure that more rapid progress is made toward implementation of the agreements reached there. Japan recognizes the importance of the issues that will be addressed at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Environment and Development (UNGASS) this June, including the review and appraisal of implementation of Agenda 21. Further progress will require coordination and reconciliation of the different positions that nations have taken, which are often the product of their particular development and economic backgrounds. It will also require adoption of remedial measures formulated from a global and long-term point of view, taking duly into consideration the achievements and the unrealized expectations of the last five years. Japan is of the view that developed and developing countries must work together in a global partnership to promote environmental protection and development if we are to achieve sustainable development which was established at UNCED as our paramount goal in this area.
2. Japan believes that successful implementation of the agreements to be reached at UNGASS depends primarily on whether all the countries of the world, represented at the highest level, can achieve a consensus and political commitment to cooperation in the field of development and environment after UNGASS.
3. At UNGASS, every country should review its principal achievements in the five years since UNCED

(cont'd pg.6, UNGASS)

Survey on Eco-Friendly Lifestyles

The Environment Agency completed a survey in January questioning how Japanese citizens are incorporating environment-friendly activities into their lifestyles. This survey follows a similar survey taken at the beginning of 1996, and adds questions about respondents' participation in non-profit organizations working to protect the environment. Questionnaires were sent to 4,000 Japanese men and women selected at random, aged 20 or more. 1,220 people responded.

A SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS FOLLOWS:

1. A higher percentage in this survey than in the last responded that they felt environmental conditions in general were worsening, and

(cont'd pg.2, Eco)

(from pg.1, Eco)

- 75% said they felt the global environment was worsening.
2. Respondents felt the strongest concern about environmental problems such as waste and recycling issues, global deforestation, and destruction of the ozone layer.
 3. Responses were similar to those in the previous survey regarding environmental thinking in that 90% or more agreed that all countries need to cooperate on global environmental problems, that environmental education is needed, and that people should reexamine their high-consumption, high-waste lifestyles; more than 70% agreed that environmental assessment should be legislated; and more than 60% agreed that economic measures such as environmental taxes and deposit-refund systems should be introduced for environmental protection, even if they resulted in an economic burden.
 4. Large percentages of respondents claimed to do the following in their daily lives to promote environmental

- preservation:
- * "Prevent food scraps or oil from going down the kitchen drain" (79%)
 - * "Separate garbage properly according to local rules" (91%)
 - * "Avoid unnecessary idling, revving, or quick starts when driving automobiles" (88%).
- Low percentages of respondents claimed to do the following:
- * "Actively shop for goods with the Earth-friendly ecomark" (24%)
 - * "Take a bag along to hold purchases when shopping" (18%)
5. 5% of respondents said they took part in activities of non-profit organizations to help the environment.
 6. 66% evaluated themselves as actively helping the environment, but only 29% tried to encourage other people to do so. Both percentages are down from the previous survey.
 7. Overall, more than 70% of

respondents would like to receive more information of various kinds about the environment. The most common sources of this information were television and newspapers.

8. 41% had heard of the Basic Environment Plan, and 11% had heard about the Third

Selected results of eco survey (%)

Visit nature in free time	42
Purchase recycled goods, e.g. recycled paper	38
Minimize use of water	67
Exercise caution with cleaning agents	59
Avoid buying disposable products	44
Recycle newspapers and magazines	79
Save energy when heating or air conditioning	67
Use solar heat or electricity at home	15
Avoid using car. Instead walk, bicycle, train, etc.	38

Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP3). Finally, the percentage of respondents dissatisfied with the environmental administration of Japan was down slightly from the previous survey to 46%.



New Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

Japan will be establishing an institute to focus on environmental studies in a new way in 1998. The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), to be located in Shonan Village of Kanagawa Prefecture, south of Tokyo, will link studies in natural and social sciences with the aim of providing input to policy decision makers. First proposed by the "Tokyo Declaration 1994" of the "Global

Environment Action - Tokyo Conference" in that year, the IGES will provide a forum for cooperation of top-level people from the scientific community, government, industry, and NGOs from around the world.

The Preparatory Organization to Establish IGES, launched this April, will conduct various preparations, including negotiating a charter for the establishment of IGES, developing research projects, and recruiting research staff. IGES

is formulating plans for research in some of the following areas:

- * Creating a new paradigm for global civilization
- IGES will examine ideas of modern societies which have led to the global environmental crisis and seek the foundations of a new paradigm for sustainable society. Some possible examples include: Relationships between environmental change and the rise and fall of civilizations; Past and present, Eastern and Western

IPCC Integrated Assessment Modeling Workshop

On March 10th to 12th Japan hosted the IPCC Asia-Pacific Workshop on Integrated Assessment Models in Tokyo, in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations University. Over 300 researchers participated, including 140 researchers from 38 countries abroad. To deal with global warming, we must be able to answer questions such as: How will economic activity and energy consumption change in the future? Based on this, what will happen to carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions? What effect will this have on global warming? What impacts will global warming have on ecosystems, agriculture, and economic activity, etc.? What will be the costs and effects of various measures to fight global warming? In recent years, computer

simulations are being increasingly used to help answer these questions in an integrated way. To date over 20 such Integrated Assessment Models (IAMs) have been developed by research teams, which try to include various perspectives, including natural and social sciences. Mr. Tsuneo Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice Minister of the Environment Agency of Japan, in his welcome address pointed out the significance of this Workshop being the first meeting of the IPCC exclusively devoted to IAMs. During the Workshop, participants shared the latest information available about models and their performance. The participants found that IAMs will be able to help estimate the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases that will avoid dangerous global warming and its impact. Many agreed that IAMs should be able

to contribute to the success of the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 1997. However, for any of the



Dr. Bert Bolin addresses the workshop existing models to be useful for policy makers, improvements are still needed, as concluded by Dr. Bert Bolin, Chairman of the IPCC. IAMs are already playing a significant role in policy making in developed countries, but are not being used as much in developing countries. Participants agreed that more consideration of the social,


(cont'd pg.7, IPCC)

thought about human coexistence with nature and the environment; Rethinking modern science, technology, and economics to take better account of environmental considerations and the finiteness of resources; Equity between present and future generations, equity between regions, and international environmental law; and Global environmental ethics and education.

* Introducing Innovative Policy Measures
IGES will propose measures to implement policies which address

issues involving the diverse interests of nations and sectors of society. This process will involve both researchers and stakeholders, and aim to contribute to consensus-building. One example of a proposal that could result is a treaty to prevent acid rain in East Asia.

* Formulating Regional/Local Environmental Strategies
IGES will focus on issues facing the Asia Pacific region, utilize the input of leading researchers to propose concrete environmental strategies to deal with them, and assist in

moving from strategies into practice, for example: Planning for long-term sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. 

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Global Partnership Summit on Environment

The Global Partnership Summit on Environment was held in Tokyo from March 22 to 24. It was hosted by Global Environmental Action (GEA), a non-governmental group chaired by Mr. Gaishi Hiraiwa, former President of Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organizations), in cooperation with the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The Conference involved 26 official participants who are prominent figures of the international environmental community. It also had the participation of the

members of GEA including former Japanese prime ministers and leaders in political, business and academic fields.

The purpose of the Conference was to provide input to contribute to the success of the UN Special Session of the General Assembly (UNGASS) in June, which will work toward realization of the sustainable development plan adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992.

The meeting was chaired by The Honorable Ms. Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Parliament of Sweden and Chairperson of the High Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development to the Secretary General of the United Nations. In the closing speech,

U.S. Vice President Albert Gore urged all countries to strive in partnership to make the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change succeed.

The result of the meeting was the Tokyo Declaration 1997, which states that while some progress has been made since UNCED, "overall progress towards sustainable development is still very limited," and calls for a "renewed urgency that all partners energize their individual and joint actions." Some major recommendations on general issues and financial mechanisms included: (1) that the United Nations Environment Programme be strengthened and consideration be given to its eventual transformation into a stronger

Int'l Conference on Opportunities and Problems of Early Actions for Climate Protection

The International Conference on Opportunities and Problems of Early Actions for Climate Protection was convened in Kyoto on March 30-31 hosted by the Environment Agency of Japan, in cooperation with the World Resources Institute, the Woods Hole Research Center, Kyoto Prefecture and Kyoto City. It was attended by 34 experts from both Japan and abroad. The major theme of the conference was evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of early actions against climate change. Results of the discussions during the two-day conference include recognition that:

1) Establishment of policies with

clear messages is essential in helping encourage and promote efforts from societies with diverse economies.

2) A range of technological measures are available which are highly cost-effective, and it is advantageous to ensure flexibility in future policies by building long-lasting production facilities now which have minimal impact on the environment. It is also highly advantageous to start taking actions at an early stage.

3) It is important to have legally binding emission reduction targets by the year 2005, in addition to long-term goals, constituting the framework of these policies. It is also necessary to establish and maintain a system within each country which promotes these policies.

The Environment Agency of Japan

regards the results of this conference valuable as a summation of the voices of policy research institutes and some industries which garner international trust. It will provide valuable reference for the government negotiators of all the Parties attending the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP3), which will be held in Kyoto in December 1997.

BELOW ARE SOME OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Robert Watson's keynote address emphasized that the earth's atmosphere and climate were changing, and may cause problems for human health, ecological systems, and socio-economic sectors, because of energy and land-use policies. To prevent these changes, he said, we need to stabilize atmospheric

“Global Environmental Organization,” (2) that all countries commit themselves to concrete action toward effective



Albert Gore speaks on climate change

implementation of the UN Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the 3rd Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the UNFCCC this December in Kyoto,

(3) that UNGASS consider a ten-year review of post-UNCED progress in 2002, (4) that policies and conditions ensure that all public and private financial flows are

consistent with the long-term goals of sustainable development, (5) that the Global Environment

Facility (GEF) be supported and replenished, and (6) that consideration be given to creating an Intergovernmental Panel on Finance under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development to further examine financial issues. Sessions on technology transfer, production and consumption pattern reform, and science/technology and information/communication also produced many recommendations.

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greenhouse gas concentrations at 450 to 550 ppmv (CO₂ equivalent: twice pre-industrial levels), and this will require limitations by non-Annex I Parties around 2025 and 2050 respectively in addition to those on Annex I Parties.

Participants made several points, including:

1) requiring faster reduction in GHG emissions could encourage investment decisions that would create markets for new business, thus positively affecting the economy rather than hurting it as predicted by traditional economic models;

2) there already exists good green technology which is underutilized because of low energy prices and other market barriers, but its diffusion now would advance sustainable development

worldwide;

3) waiting to make changes in infrastructure, practices, and preferences only makes these changes much harder later on, and clear policy messages can promote these changes from an early stage;

4) key factors for success include binding agreements with simple accounting, international cooperation, and constructive involvement of industries;

5) many industries in the US, Europe and Japan already have voluntary programs for climate protection and welcome explicit government strategies;

6) negative impacts are likely to include loss of export revenue, especially for fossil fuel exporters, increased trade barriers, and possibly a global economic slowdown, while positive effects may include technological

innovation and its transference to developing countries, greater efficiency, lower costs, and reduced capital investments, and, of course, environmental improvement;

7) the developing countries do not bear a disproportionate cost in tackling climate change, and there is a need to achieve equitable burden sharing through global cooperation;

8) institutional frameworks are needed to reward companies for taking early actions; and

9) these early actions will provide economic and environmental benefits for both industrialized and developing countries.

(from pg.1, UNGASS)

and express strong political determination to maintain the momentum generated there and resolve the key issues which were identified. Furthermore, a brief but action-oriented joint political declaration should be adopted that addresses following issues:

(1) Implementation since UNCED

(2) Priority future programmes and projects after 1997

(3) The future institutional structure and role of CSD

(4) Recommendations concerning particularly urgent issues

4. Japan believes that it is essential to have the participation of global and regional institutions, national governments, local authorities, the United Nations, including all its international organizations and special agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and other major groups, in order to realize sustainable development and resolve global environmental problems. Thus, UNGASS should also discuss measures to strengthen the role each actor should play and how these roles are to be coordinated. In particular, we should recognize the importance of regional-level implementation and share experiences of any such actions already taken.

IMPLEMENTATION SINCE UNCED

5. Significant progress has been made in the field of environment and development since UNCED. For example, Japan set for itself the goal of expanding ODA in the field of the environment to a range of 900 billion to one trillion yen in the five-year period beginning fiscal year 1992, and accomplished that goal one year early.

6. Reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 at UNGASS should be concise and based on previous reports from other conferences including CSD.

7. We should reaffirm that there

will be no renegotiation of existing agreements relating to the environment and sustainable development including Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration, and the Forest Principles.

PRIORITY FUTURE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS AFTER 1997

8. At UNGASS, urgent and achievable global targets relating to the environment and sustainable development should be established after a thorough discussion. The sectoral and cross-sectoral issues on environment and development to which Japan attaches priority are as follows:

(SECTORAL ISSUES)

9. Climate change: To promote further cooperation so that at the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto in December 1997, will reach commitments which are effective in preventing global warming, fair and feasible to implement.

10. Forests: To promote further action toward the establishment of sustainable forest management based on the results of the meeting of the International Panel on Forests (IPF).

11. Marine pollution: To recognize the necessity of strengthening measures to cope with significant maritime environmental pollution, such as oil pollution caused by tanker accidents.

12. Chemicals: To promote agreement on Prior Informed Consent (PIC) with respect to trade in specified hazardous chemicals, and also to encourage international action to promote human health and environmental protection through the reduction of persistent organic pollutants.

13. Biological diversity: To enhance the awareness of all countries, so that each will

commit itself to the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and so that an appropriate international framework on bio-safety can be adopted. Also, to promote further activities to implement relevant agreements such as CITES and the Ramsar Convention.

14. Ozone layer depletion: To reaffirm adherence to the programmes relating to protection of the ozone layer, such as the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol.

(CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES)

15. Environmental education: It is important to promote education, public awareness, and training in order to enhance sustainable development and develop the capacity of citizens to deal with problems relating to environment and development. Thus it is of great urgency to promote means of encouraging their participation in environmental activities, while deepening every individual's understanding and recognition of the relationship between the human race and the environment.

16. Research and development and technology transfer: It is important to promote technology transfer from developed to developing countries, and to actively develop research and development efforts that will contribute to technological innovation, in order to address global environmental issues such as global warming. Developed countries should play the leading role in this field. Analysis of the forces producing environmental change, including in particular those that are global in scale, and estimates of their likely impact, are needed.

Developed countries should make active efforts to transfer to developing countries useful knowledge and experience, for example, in the area of pollution

(cont'd pg.7, UNGASS)

(from pg.6, UNGASS)

control. Moreover, it is critical to construct an international information and telecommunications network that will enable countries to choose the technologies most appropriate to their needs from those already in existence.

17. Changing production and consumption patterns: In order to realize sustainable development, the government, local authorities, the private sector, and individuals should work together to establish a sustainable socio-economic system that will have a minimal negative impact on the environment by changing production and consumption patterns and by promoting further effective use of natural resources and energy, recycling schemes, environmental education and public awareness.

18. Financial issues: It continues to be important to provide financial assistance to developing countries in the form of ODA, as the efforts of those countries to protect their environments and achieve sustainable development very much deserve support. It is worth noting that new development strategies formulated by OECD/DAC stress cooperation in the environmental field. Furthermore, it is necessary to

encourage developing countries to make efforts to seek private capital inflows. Insufficient attention has been given to creating innovative and effective financing mechanisms thus far, and further efforts must therefore be made.

19. Capacity building: It is crucial that every nation engage in self-help efforts, that is, in action to solve environmental problems, with determination and all the resources they can bring to bear in order to develop the capacity to arrive at effective environmental protection. Thus, from a long-term point of view, it is a matter of urgency to adopt capacity-building measures. Self-help efforts are also the foundation of an effective partnership between countries and regions. Moreover, new political methods and net-works should be developed among specific regional environmental research centers.

THE FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF THE CSD

20. The declaration issued at the conclusion of UNGASS should also address the future institutional structure of CSD. In particular, it should focus on reaffirming the framework of CSD and the UNCSO multi-year work

programme.

21. The CSD should be reaffirmed as the central forum in which to institute and review long-term goals and strategies, and in which to engage in broad and high-level strategic and policy discussions on the environment and sustainable development.

22. In the future, the UNCSO work programme should focus on a limited number of key issues in order to raise concern and stimulate in-depth discussion. Japan believes that the multi-year programme of the work of the UNCSO that has been included in a draft report prepared by the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/1997/2) for review at the fifth session of UNCSO is a starting point for such discussion. However, the section entitled "The Economic Sector/The Major Groups" should not be taken up because the range of the issues these sections encompass is overly broad and because some of the subjects are being taken up as sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. "Forests," "Chemicals," and "Marine Pollution" might replace "Land Resources" and "Oceans and Seas" as themes. Furthermore, issues that have been addressed in other existing forums should be excluded from the agenda of the

(cont'd pg.8, UNGASS)

(from pg.3, IPCC)

economic, and other factors in developing countries, and a continuation of dialogue between modelers and policy makers about IAMs would provide important input for improvements in models. They also agreed on the need for more efforts to develop regional models and capacity building for modelers in each country. In this context, mention was made of the

Asian Pacific Integrated Model (AIM) created by Japan which is now developing into a common integrated assessment model in cooperation with other Asian countries.

Dr. Hoesung Lee, Chairman of the International Organizing Committee for the Workshop, pointed out that now is an important transition period

between the IPCC Second Assessment Report released in 1995, and the Third, which is expected at the end of the year 2000. Modelers now believe that they will have progressed enough so that IAMs can make a large contribution to the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC and play an important role in dealing with climate change.

Please send me JEQ. Please note my new address.

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1997
 June
 23-27 Special Session of United Nations General Assembly (New York)
 30-31 Second APN Scientific Planning Group Meeting (Tokyo)

September
 7-8 Sixth Environmental Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA '97) (Kobe)
 30-31 International Conference on Opportunities and Problems of Early Actions for Climate Change (Kyoto)

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

1998
 January
 17-18 Junior Eco-Club Asia Conference (Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan)

March
 Third APN Inter-Governmental Meeting (Beijing)

(from pg.7, UNGASS)

Commission.

23. The duration of CSD sessions should be as brief as possible in order to enhance cost-effectiveness (two weeks would be optimal). The Commission should provide a forum in which each country can introduce information about implementation measures it has taken and experience with its own programme of action for sustainable development so as to help other countries.

24. It should be reaffirmed that the participation of the ministries (and ministers) in charge of environment and development is essential to the effective achievement of sustainable development.

25. In order to improve the institutional structure of CSD, it is important to strengthen links between existing international organizations and the secretariats of the conventions and also to avoid duplication of their work or functions. In this context, the role of CSD should be clearly differentiated from that of UNEP, and this should be discussed at UNGASS.

26. The role of CSD as a forum in which to discuss strategic goals concerning sustainable development should be distinguished from that of UNEP as an organization that deals with the monitoring and evaluation of the state of the environment, and with the development and preparation of international laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PARTICULARLY URGENT ISSUES

27. A special meeting with high-level participants should be convened for the purpose of carrying out a second comprehensive review of overall progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 in 2002, which is five years after UNGASS and ten years after UNCED.

28. Through UNGASS, it should be stressed that information and telecommunications systems play an important role in promoting sustainable development with a minimal environmental impact, as they contribute to creating socio-economic systems and lifestyles that are sounder environmentally.

