

Japan Environment Quarterly

News from the
Environment Agency

Vol. 5 No. 4 December 2000

C O N T E N T S

COP6 Climate Negotiations— Japan's View	1
Acid Deposition Monitoring Network Makes Progress	2
Air Pollution in Japan	2
Plan for Reducing Dioxins in Japan	3
Promoting Low-emission Vehicles	4
New Crested Ibis Mei Mei Presented by China	5
Local Agenda 21s	5
New Study on Material Flows	6
Singer Tokiko Kato Appointed as UNEP Special Envoy	8

COP6 Climate Negotiations—Japan's View

An important meeting to address the issue of global warming was held from 13 to 25 November in the Hague, the Netherlands. At the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP6), negotiators held meaningful discussions and made considerable progress on a number of key issues. However, the session was suspended one day after the scheduled final day, without reaching the hoped-for agreement due to difficulties encountered in negotiations on key issues. This article introduces the outcomes of the meeting from the perspective of the Environment Agency.

The goal of the meeting was to make the Kyoto Protocol ratifiable and have it enter into force by the year 2002, by reaching agreement on important details. The protocol, agreed in Kyoto in 1997, commits 39 industrialized countries to limit their emissions of six greenhouse gases, by an average of 5.2 percent below 1990 levels during the first commitment period (2008 to 2012). At COP6, it was hoped that the ministers representing their countries could find political solutions to the difficult issues left unresolved at preparatory meetings.

Jan Pronk, the conference president and environment minister of the Netherlands, broke the meeting into four subgroups and sought for convergence of opinions. However, large differences among developed countries, and between positions of developed and developing countries, made it extremely difficult to reach agreement on all the key issues.

For Japan's participation in the meeting, the Minister of State for the environment,



Ms. Kawaguchi, Minister of State and Director-General of the Environment Agency, addresses COP6 participants

Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, served as the head of the government's delegation. In an effort to contribute to the success of the meeting, Japan organized a meeting of developed countries regarding the issue of financial assistance to developing countries, in response to a request from the conference president. In addition, Minister Kawaguchi chaired the subgroup on the Kyoto Mechanisms, one of the most controversial topics at the meeting.

(cont'd pg.6, COP6)

Acid Deposition Monitoring Network Makes Progress

The Second Intergovernmental Meeting on the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) was held on 25-26 October in Niigata.

EANET started its preparatory-phase activities in 1998 with participation of the ten countries, namely, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

The objectives of EANET are to create a common understanding of the state of the acid deposition problems in East Asia; to provide useful inputs for decision-making at local, national and regional levels aimed at preventing or reducing adverse impacts on the environment caused by acid deposition; and to contribute to cooperation on the issues related

to acid deposition among participating countries of the network.

The major outcomes of the meeting are described below.

(I) The meeting endorsed the “Report on Acid Deposition Monitoring of EANET during the Preparatory Phase—It’s Results, Major Constraints and Ways to Overcome Them”, and recommended that the Interim Network Center (Acid Deposition and Oxidant Research Center, or ADORC) would publish this report.


(II) It was agreed that the EANET activities on a regular basis would start from January 2001, based on the results of the preparatory-phase activities.

(III) It was decided that the office of the Environmental

Assessment Programme for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would be designated as the Secretariat for EANET. Until this office starts operations after the third Intergovernmental Meeting in the autumn of 2001, the Environment Agency of Japan will continue to function as the Interim Secretariat.

(IV) The ADORC in Niigata, Japan, will start the Network Center functions as of January 2001.

(V) Monitoring guidelines and technical manuals, adopted at the Second Interim Scientific Advisory Group Meeting, were approved.

(VI) “Work Program and Budget for EANET in 2001” were approved. 

Air Pollution in Japan


The Environment Agency recently compiled air pollution data obtained in fiscal 1999 at 2,135 stations nationwide (1,720 general air pollution monitoring stations, 415 roadside air pollution monitoring stations), in accordance with the Air Pollution Control Law.

Environmental quality standards have been established for air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), suspended particulate matter (SPM), photochemical oxidants (O_x), sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO), most of which affect the human respiratory system.

According to the monitoring

data, almost all the monitoring stations attained the environmental quality standards of CO and SO₂. For NO₂, the achievement ratios of the environmental quality standards was 98.9 percent for the general air pollution monitoring stations and 78.7 percent for roadside air pollution monitoring stations, which were slightly improved than 1998. The achievement ratios of the environment quality standards for SPM was 90.1 and 76.2, respectively, which were slightly improved than the previous year. Annual average concentrations of both NO₂ and SPM have been stable nationwide in recent years,

but a slight decline was observed in 1999, due to temporary reasons such as meteorological conditions. Almost no stations achieved the environmental quality standard for O_x. High Ox concentrations were observed many days in and around urban area in the Kanto (eastern Japan) and Kansai (western Japan) districts.

The Environment Agency will continue tackling for reducing urban air pollution by strengthening measures to cut emissions from factories and businesses, regulations for automobile exhaust gases and efforts to promote low-emission vehicles. 


Plan for Reducing Dioxins in Japan

The government has been making steady progress in response to public concern about the levels of dioxins in Japan, with the establishment of the Basic Guidelines for Promotion of Measures Against Dioxins, and the passing of the Law Concerning Special Measures Against Dioxins. Specific steps taken to date include setting the level of tolerable daily intake (TDI) of dioxins, as well as establishing environmental quality standards for air, water and soil, and standards to regulate emissions to air and water.

More recently, on 22 September the Conference of Environmental

Pollution Control of the national government adopted the Plan to Reduce the Amount of Dioxins Emitted from Business Activities in Japan. The Plan includes measures to reduce emissions to the range of 843 to 891 g-TEQ/year by end of March 2002, following the Basic Guidelines which call for a reduction of about 90 percent in emissions in 2002 compared to 1997. The table shows a breakdown of industries targeted by the Plan.

The Plan establishes reduction targets for each industry as well as measures to achieve them. It also covers steps that should be taken

by the national and local governments to reduce the volume of waste, assist businesses, and promote environmental education. Finally, it also stipulates measures to be taken by the national government, including promotion of measures for cities and towns to improve their waste treatment facilities; annual preparation and public reporting of emissions inventories; promotion of research and development; improvement of measuring systems; and proper information provision and disclosure to the public. 

DIOXIN EMISSION TARGETS (1997-2002), BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Target for 2002	Emissions in 1997
1. Waste treatment, consisting of:	576 to 622	6,841 to 7,092
General waste incinerators	310	5000
Industrial waste incinerators	200	1,500
Small-scale waste incinerators	66 to 112	340-591
2. Industrial categories consisting of:	264	454
Electrical furnaces for steel making	130.3	228.5
Sintering processes in steel industry	93.2	135.0
Zinc recovery (furnaces)	13.8	42.3
Aluminum alloy manufacturing (furnaces)	11.8	21.3
Other industries	15	26.7
3. Other	3-5	3.32 to 5.92
Total emissions	843 to 891	7,300 to 7,550

Units: g-TEQ/year, based on WHO-TEF (1998)

Note: The targeted overall reduction is 88.2 to 88.5 percent.

Promoting Low-emission Vehicles

The Environment Agency has been trying to promote low-emission vehicles in Japan through financial assistance, tax incentives and encouraging technological development. This is in response to pollution in urban areas, such as nitrous oxides and suspended particulate matter. Despite these efforts, there were only about 45,600 low-emission vehicles nationwide by the end of March 2000.

In 1997, the Environment Agency established the Committee to Study Measures for the Mass Promotion of Low-emission Vehicles, which has met thirteen times to date. The committee completed its interim report in May 1999, covering regulatory measures, economic measures, and other ways to encourage their spread. The committee continued discussions based on that report, taking into account new trends, considering new measures targeting automobile makers and

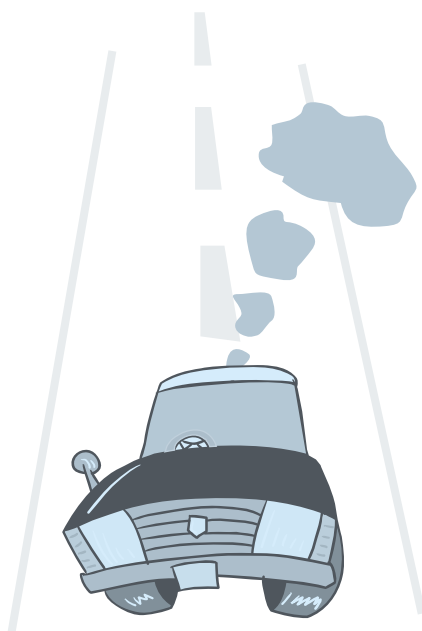
businesses, and envisioning some scenarios. It released the report of these discussions in October 2000.

One major outcome was the recommendation to include gasoline-powered vehicles as low-emission vehicles, because new low-emission cars powered by gasoline have appeared on the market recently. Until now, only four types of vehicles were counted as low-emission vehicles—electric, natural gas, methanol and hybrid.

Based on automakers' forecasts, there may be as many as 7.53 million low-emission vehicles in operation nationwide by 2010, including 7.48 million mid-size vehicles (up to 3.5 tonnes), and 50,000 heavy-duty vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes). The committee stated that assistance was needed to deal with large polluting diesel-powered vehicles, and find ways to move them toward being low-emissions vehicles.

The committee also considered making it mandatory for

automakers to ensure that a certain percentage of their products manufactured or sold are low-emissions vehicles (using a measure such as the "fleet average," calculated from the emissions of the new vehicles sold in one year). It concluded that the most appropriate approach would be a voluntary system in which automakers report to the government, which makes the results public and then provides recommendations or awards for achievement. In addition, the committee considered making mandatory the introduction of low-emission vehicles by companies that use heavy vehicles such as trucks (2 and 4 tonne load ratings, or vehicle weights from 3.5 to 8 tonnes). It concluded that this topic should be studied further, taking into account legal and institutional factors so that the national government's initiatives are compatible with the regulations of local governments. 🌍



New Crested Ibis Mei Mei Presented by China

China presented a new female Crested Ibis for “Yu Yu”, the male born in 1999 from parents that were also given by China to Japan. “Mei Mei” arrived at Niigata Airport on November 14, and was transported to the “Sado Japanese Crested Ibis Conservation Center”. On November 16, a delivery ceremony was held with Ms. Kawaguchi, a Minister of State and the Director-General of the Environment Agency. Japan and China agreed that Crested Ibis offspring born of the pair are to be shared between the two countries, with the first going to China, the second remaining in Japan, and so on.

Both countries intend to organize a Joint Plan of Japan-

China Crested Ibis Protection to promote the species conservation.

Many methods of conservation had been carried out, but Crested Ibis is still brink of extinction. Crested Ibis exist only about 250

in the earth. It will be no doubt that a Joint Plan of Japan-China Crested Ibis Protection is very important to protect the species from the “extinction”. 🌍



Mei Mei (on your right), Yu Yu (on your left)

Local Agenda 21s

In October the Environment Agency released results of its study on how local governments were implementing their own versions of Agenda 21—or “Local Agenda 21s.” The Agenda 21, adopted in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, states that local governments should prepare Local Agenda 21s to realize sustainable development at the local level. The five-year review of progress since UNCED, held in 1997 at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, restated that sustainable development plans of local

governments should be actively encouraged.

The Environment Agency study found that as of May 2000, 45 prefectural governments in Japan, as well as all of 12 government ordinance-designated cities, and 113 smaller cities, wards, towns and villages had adopted a Local Agenda 21, an increase over last year of 3, 0, and 41, respectively. The study reveals that local governments are making a serious effort to tackle the issue of conservation of the global environment.

In terms of reviewing of Local Agenda 21s, 22 prefectural

governments and 7 government ordinance-designated cities have the systems to monitor progress with Local Agenda 21s, and 10 communities plan to revise their Local Agenda 21s by the end of the next fiscal year.

At the regional level, in order to contribute to sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, in 1999 the Environment Agency produced a Local Agenda 21 planning manual for Asian countries and it plans to hold a seminar in Korea before the end of March 2001. 🌍

New Study on Material Flows

The World Resources Institute in September published “The Weight of Nations: Material outflows from industrial economies.” The report presents the results of a second joint study about material flows according to the amounts of resources used and waste outputs of five major industrialized countries (Austria, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States).


Japan’s National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) joined with research institutes of the four other countries for this study. The first report, “Resource flows: The Material Basis of Industrial Economies,” documented material *inputs* into industrial economies. As the subtitle suggests, the second study report completes the material cycle by documenting and analyzing the material *output* flows.

Besides showing the total amount of outputs, the report also provides details of outputs into environmental media such as carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) and other pollutants emitted to air, waste sent to landfills, materials applied to the land including fertilizers and agricultural chemicals, and pollutants put into the water. It also classifies outputs by type of economic activity, including agriculture, construction, energy supply, mining and manufacturing, household, and transportation.

Key findings of “The Weight of Nations” include:

- Industrial economies are becoming more efficient in their use of materials, but waste generation continues to increase.
- In the five industrialized

countries studied, between one-half and three-quarters of annual resource inputs to the economy are returned to the environment as wastes within a year.

- Outputs of some hazardous materials have been regulated and successfully reduced or stabilized, but outputs of many potentially harmful materials continue to increase.
- The extraction and use of fossil energy resources dominate output flows in all industrial countries.
- Physical accounts are urgently needed, because our knowledge of resource use and waste outputs is surprisingly limited. 

More information is available on the Internet at

www.wri.org/materials/weightofnations.html

(from pg.1, COP6)

MAJOR ISSUES AT COP6

This meeting required complex negotiations—the treatment of carbon sinks, restrictions on the use of the Kyoto Mechanisms, and issues of compliance with the Protocol, as well as the issue of financial assistance to developing countries. It could be compared in complexity with trying to solve a multi-variable simultaneous equation. The major issues are described below.

1. Developing Countries

Developing countries welcomed the general ideas proposed by the Umbrella Group (a loose alliance of Parties that includes Canada, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States) regarding financial assistance to developing countries, one of the highest profile issues of the conference. However, when it came down to the details, flexibility between Parties was

lacking, and developing countries could not accept proposals that had been made. Specifically, consensus was reached on the additionality of funds, but could not be reached on particular details such as objectives, scale, and implementing bodies. Negotiators reached agreement on many points, such as capacity building, adaptation measures, and additional guidance to the Global Environment Facility, but gaps in opinion remained regarding

measures targeting oil producing countries, and an expert group on technology transfer.

2. Sinks

Issues that attracted attention were limitation of credits for carbon sinks, and the distinction between natural and human induced effect. The European Union and developing countries expressed opposition to applying credits for additional sink-related activities during the first commitment period, due to scientific uncertainty and due to concern about the scale of credits. However, some developed countries sought compromises, such as the possibility of applying limitation so that countries could not acquire excessive amounts of credits—on the precondition that credits could be applied to the first commitment period. In addition, Japan—which is already advanced in its energy efficiency initiatives—was exploring the possibility of securing the sinks it needs to achieve its targets. However, in the end, negotiators could not reach agreement.

3. Kyoto Mechanisms

Major points of contention included supplementality (i.e., how to ensure that the use of Kyoto Mechanisms shall be supplemental to domestic actions in a developed country; achieving its Kyoto target); limits on types of projects

that could be included under the Clean Development Mechanism (the CDM would allow developed countries to use emissions credits accruing from project activities implemented in developing countries); and the composition of the CDM Executive Board.

Regarding the composition of the CDM Executive Board, no convergence of opinion emerged between the developed and developing countries. Regarding CDM project eligibility, some movement was made in the direction of not making lists and restrictions. Regarding the eligibility of nuclear power and sinks projects, some Parties were of the opinion that these types of projects should not be eligible, but in the end no consensus emerged on this point. Regarding the use of official development assistance (ODA) for CDM projects, the Note by the President included text along the lines of Japan's view that if the ODA in question is additional, it can be used for the CDM.


4. Compliance Regimes

The major issue here was the composition of the compliance committee, in particular the enforcement branch which covers the consequences for non-compliance under Article 3.1 of the Protocol. The president's draft on this issue proposed that the composition of members be based

on equitable geographical representation, a position close to that of the G77 and China. However, many Annex I (industrialized) Parties, including Japan, could not accept this.

OUTCOME

Although COP6 did not end with the desired agreement, in the course of the discussions the positions and thinking of each country were clarified, mutual understanding deepened, and the divergence between developed countries narrowed. This achievement will certainly contribute to progress in future negotiations. In particular, regarding the issue of supplementarity the parties got closer to common understanding. For sinks, at one point there was almost convergence of views in which Japan could secure its needed amount of sinks, while at the same time the U.S. sinks were largely limited. In addition, the Umbrella Group made a detailed joint proposal regarding financial assistance. These points will serve as a platform for future negotiations.


It is very likely that COP6 will be resumed in late May and early June. Each party and negotiating group must strive to narrow the gaps in their positions in order to lead to the success of COP6. The strong leadership of the conference president will also be essential. 

Singer Tokiko Kato Appointed as UNEP Special Envoy

On 30 October 2000, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) appointed popular Japanese singer Tokiko Kato as its Special Envoy. Ms. Kato is a renowned musician whose musical career spans four decades. She won the best singing artist award of the Japan Record Grand Prix in 1969 and 1971. She is also deeply committed to protecting the environment, such as a commitment which shows in her music, her charity concerts and participation in other events for the environment, and her role as Councilor for World Wide Found for Nature Japan (WWF of Japan).

Enormous scientific studies have led the way to more sophisticated technology, sounder conservation policies and legislation, and more widely adopted international conventions. But this technical approach is not enough. Environmental conservation must begin in minds and souls of people. Prominent personalities from the worlds of art and music have the personality to capture the imagination of people and policy-makers and the passion to inspire their faith on who care about future towards conservation objectives.

Her responsibilities as a UNEP Special Envoy will include visiting Asia-Pacific countries where environmental grass-roots activities are taking place and encouraging the people in their works; looking into relevant issues to enhance the activities, reporting on current environmental situations and activities, and publicizing through the mass media environmental activities and the work of UNEP in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Japan.

Mr. Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP, sent a message to commemorate the appointment, stating that UNEP hopes Ms. Kato will help explain how UNEP is helping to negotiate global environmental treaties, encourage the business community towards cleaner production, and empower community groups to have a say about how sustainable development can work for them. 



For more information about events and articles in JEQ please contact the Global Environment Department.

Japan
ENVIRONMENT
Quarterly

Published by the Global Environment Department, Environment Agency
1-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8975 Japan
Tel: +81-3-5521-8244 Fax: +81-3-3504-1634
E-mail: globe.dep@eanet.go.jp Homepage: <http://www.eic.or.jp>

2001

February

5-9 The 21st session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme (Nairobi, Kenya)

27-28 International Workshop for the ECO ASIA Long-Term Perspective Project (Tokyo)

March

2-4 G8 Environment Ministers' Meeting (Trieste, Italy)

5-16 Ad Hoc Inter-sessional Working Group of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (New York)

21-23 The 19th OECD/Environment Policy Committee (Paris)

April

16-27 The 9th Session of the Commission of Sustainable Development (New York)

May

16 OECD/Environment Policy Committee at Ministerial Level (Paris)