

**Statement by Dr. Yasuyuki Eda,
Senior Vice-Minister of the Environment of Japan**
on the Occasion of the
14th Session of the United Nations
Commission on Sustainable Development
New York, May 11, 2006

Mr. Chairman, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to give a few words to you today on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Domestic Experiences and Measures

Let me start by touching upon Japan's experiences. During the course of its economic growth, Japan experienced severe air pollution due to rapid industrialization and changes in its transportation system. In order to address this, Japan has been working to implement a number of measures, including enforcement of the strictest regulations in the world on automobile exhaust gases.

Since Japan has limited domestic energy resources, the enhancement of energy efficiency has been one of its most crucial issues. After the oil crisis of the 1970s, Japan achieved the world's highest energy efficiency, and this constitutes one of the bases for Japan's current international competitiveness. Being the world biggest producer of solar batteries, Japan also contributes to expansion of renewable energy usage.

The efficient use of fossil fuels also constitutes a measure to combat climate change. In order to achieve its reduction target under the Kyoto Protocol, Japan has been working on further domestic reduction efforts, and both the private and public sectors are working to promote international cooperation, including through use of the Kyoto Mechanisms.

Also, to achieve the ultimate goal of the UN FCCC, it is crucial that there be further promotion of substantial emissions reductions on a global basis over the long term. To this end, it is essential that for the period beyond 2012, we create an effective framework which promotes the greatest possible reduction efforts by major emitters while enabling all countries to undertake countermeasures in accordance with their ability.

International Cooperation

Mr. Chairman,

In order to attain sustainable development, environmentally-sound energy supply and use are indispensable. I believe that the experience and the technology that have emerged in Japan constitute a significant contribution towards solving issues that other countries now face. Japan puts high priority on sharing good practices with the international community.

As you know, Japan works in close cooperation with her international partners. For example, we provide support for international joint activities on climate change undertaken by the IEA and the World Bank.

Japan also works to promote public and private partnerships. For example, Japan is actively participating in the Asia-Pacific Partnership Network on Clean Development and Climate.

Japan also makes great efforts to contribute to other countries' capacity building and regional cooperation. As just one example, Japan has been promoting the Kyoto Initiative, which facilitates the development and implementation of climate change countermeasures primarily through official development assistance. Moreover, Japan plays a major role in monitoring networks in Asia.

Changes in Lifestyles and Other Areas

Mr. Chairman,

As we pursue environmentally sound and sustainable consumption and production patterns, we recognize that not only technology-based efforts but also changes in lifestyles and socio-industrial structures are essential.

To this end, Japan advocates the 3R Initiative, which aims to establish a sound material-cycle society through efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle wastes, under the slogan "MOTTAINAI," an expression that means to cherish and respect limited resources and that describes the soul of Japan and the country's way of life since ancient times.

In addition, we have been promoting awareness-raising activities including large-scale campaigns and activities towards the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which was advocated by Japan, and for which we have adopted the national implementation plan in this March.

Conclusion

To conclude, our efforts to improve energy efficiency and to promote renewable energy use lead to not only industrial development but also air pollutants and green house gases reduction. Japan would like to keep contributing to these important issues sharing our lessons learned and good practices.

I hope all distinguished ministers and other parties conduct frank exchanges of views in order to take another step forward towards the resolution of these global issues.

Thank you very much.