



# United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة · 联合国环境规划署  
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ



## Text of video message by Dr. Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director, UNEP

*delivered at the Ministerial Meeting on the 3R Initiative  
29 April 2005, Tokyo, Japan*

Your excellencies, honourable ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friend, Minister Koike, Environment Minister for Japan.

First and foremost, I have to apologize - I am extremely sad that it is not possible for me to be with you in Japan today, as I was scheduled to do, and therefore I have to go on this modern way of communication to address you.

Without any doubt, this 3R conference is one of the most important activities we can imagine. We know that we also need for the future economic development – that we need this economic development to reach the Millennium Development Goals to overcome poverty, knowing that 1.2 billion people are still living on less than one dollar a day. We see that such an economic development and such a growth process is linked with a need to have more resources available, more natural resources and more energy if we are not able to change consumption patterns, if we are not able to decouple growth processes from the need for resources.

And therefore, the idea to close the cycle again – to make reuse, reduce and recycle a must, all around the economy and all around the world. Without doing this, it will be tremendously difficult to reach these development needs, to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

First and foremost let me offer congratulations to the government of Japan, especially to Minister Koike, for setting this on the agenda of the G8, for stimulating this thinking in circular development. The 'life cycle economy' as mentioned by others focuses on the same main idea – like rivers flowing to the same sea.

It is without any doubt that this conference is extremely timely. We are preparing for the Millennium Summit in September this year. We know that one main part in this summit is the realization of the Millennium Development Goals – exactly what is at the centre of this meeting as well. You know that we also have to change and to develop the awareness of all the people around the world. So this 3R concept – reuse, reduce, and recycle – is also necessary to promote, in different parts of the world, to the people and citizens in their day to day lives and to private business.

I learnt from my good friend, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Ms. Wangari Maathai, when she came back from Japan to Nairobi, of this wonderful concept of 'mottai nai' – that it is more than just a technical solution, that it has something to do with the overall spirit and dedication of the people.

I am very sure that UNEP has to do a lot in the run up to the expectations of our Governing Council in this field. Yes, we are asked by our Governing Council to contribute in a normative way, and now also

in an operational way, to the implementation of the targets of the World Summit on sustainable Development, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

We know that there is the link to the 10-year framework on changing consumption and production patterns. To implement this, UNEP is one of the main organizations concentrated to do this – we have again to integrate the cycles to come to the 3Rs, of course, having in mind that we can also stimulate market economies, market interests. In the increase of the prices for natural resources, we have more and more market incentives, and modern technologies even go further and faster, than we are expecting today.

So it is a huge challenge – it is a huge challenge in the overall framework of the Basel Convention. It is a challenge that we avoid toxic wastes and its misuse, if it is not handled correctly using state of the art.

And as mentioned, our Governing Council gave us a lot of backing for this work, especially on capacity building and technology support. We finalized the Bali Plan of technology support and capacity building in our Governing Council meeting only some weeks ago in Nairobi.

I can inform you that I am pleased to report that UNEP is developing a '3R Platform' to further these objectives by working with the Government of Japan and a range of strategic partners. The platform would provide support for concrete 3R activities, including demonstration projects and institutional strengthening exercises by building on experiences in Japan and in other countries, and catering to the needs and specific conditions of each country to make best use of the best practices. The complex and exciting opportunities provided by emerging economies such as the fast growing countries of Asia – China, India and other countries, will further enhance the need and effectiveness of 3R policies, integrated with the circular economy and extended producer responsibility.

This Platform, Ladies and Gentlemen, friends and colleges, will have two key objectives, the first related to sustainable production, and therefore on the supply side of the equation, and the second related to sustainable consumption and therefore the demand side of the same equation. The Platform's programmatic components cover the issues that I have outlined earlier, and will be operationalized by broad cooperation among entities working on 3R issues, including national and local governments, private sector and civil society entities.

Once more, I would like to congratulate the Government of Japan for having taken the initiative to organize this Ministerial meeting. For UNEP, this is a key priority area for our work programmes. We especially want to integrate our growing strength in the International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) offices in Osaka and Shiga, so that we can directly use those experiences in Japan for our global work. We are fully committed to the implementation of recommendations emerging from this meeting. We at UNEP will therefore be following the proceedings of this meeting with keen interest, and I am very sure that the success of a more circular oriented economy of 3Rs is a precondition for realizing and implementing the Millennium Development Goals, and overcoming poverty on this planet – knowing that poverty is the most toxic element in this world.

I thank you very much and my best greetings – I sincerely hope that I can join you quite soon in implementation of the findings of your important conference.