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Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	http://www.meti.go.jp/english/index.html
Ministry of the Environment	http://www.env.go.jp/en/
The UN Commission on Sustainable Development	http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_aboutsd.shtml
The Climate Change Secretariat	http://unfccc.int/
The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	http://www.cbd.int/
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Japan's Initiatives to Cope with Global Environmental Problems





What we can do to protect the global environment

With the remarkable expansion in sphere and scale of human activities triggered by globalization, global environmental problems such as climate change and the loss of biological diversity have been considered as a threat to the earth and mankind. These problems cannot be coped with by a single country. They require a joint, cross-border approach by the international community. Global environmental problems are closely related to human activities such as economic ones, and countries often have different views on how they should cope and how far they should go. Various conventions and frameworks have been created, and international efforts have continued, to overcome such differences among countries and address the common international challenges to the conservation of the global environment and the sustainable use of natural resources. Japan regards global environmental issues as one of the important areas of its diplomacy and is actively dealing with them by making a wide range of proposals based on its own experiences in the international community.

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Initiatives on Climate Change

Global emission reduction of greenhouse gases is required.

Climate change is a pressing issue that threatens the security of mankind across the borders irrespective of whether those countries are developed or developing, and the concerted efforts by the international community to cope with the challenge need to be urgently enhanced. Japan is actively tackling climate change and leading international negotiations through announcing, among others, its ambitious mid-term target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the "Hatoyama Initiative" for supporting developing countries.



In some island countries, their territory decreases due to sea level rise.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol

The ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which entered into force in 1994, is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Following this Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, which took effect in 2005, sets specific emission reduction commitments for developed countries. Under this Protocol, Japan is required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6% as compared to the 1990 level over the five-year period from 2008 to 2012.

Japan's Specific Efforts

•Mid-term target

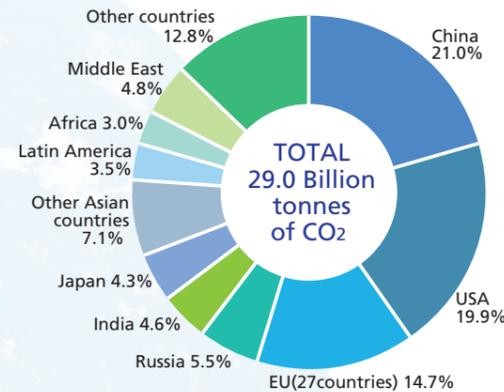
At the UN Summit on Climate Change in New York on September 22, 2009, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama announced a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2020, if compared to the 1990 level, which is premised upon the establishment of a fair and effective international framework by all major economies and agreement on their ambitious targets. The mid-term target announced by the Prime Minister was highly appreciated by many leaders and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and gave momentum to the subsequent international negotiations.

•Support for developing countries

On this occasion, Prime Minister Hatoyama pointed out the necessity of supporting developing countries to tackle climate change and announced the "Hatoyama Initiative" to the world, stating that Japan was prepared to provide more financial and technical assistance than in the past, in accordance with the progress of the international negotiations.

Later, concrete content of the "Hatoyama Initiative" was announced at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15). Under this Initiative, Japan will provide financial assistance in the amount of approximately ¥1.75 trillion (about \$15 billion), including public and private finance, of which public finance comprises approximately ¥1.3 trillion (about \$11 billion) up to the end of 2012 to developing countries that take measures to address climate change, such as mitigation, as well as those which are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change. One of the major factors that led to the Copenhagen Accord was the announcement by developed countries of their overarching policy on support for developing countries prompted by the announcement of the specific measures by Japan under the "Hatoyama Initiative".

Global CO₂ emission from fuel combustion (2007)



Source : IEA(2009) "CO₂ Emissions from Fossil Fuel Combustion"



There is a possibility that many disasters are occurring due to climate change. (Photo: Japan Center for Climate Change Actions (<http://www.jccca.org/>))

TOPICS

COP15

At COP15, which took place in Copenhagen in December 2009, intensive negotiations continued every day with the aim of reaching a political agreement which would provide an outline of establishing a framework beyond 2012. The Japanese delegation was headed by Prime Minister Hatoyama, who had meetings with other leaders, and Sakihito Ozawa, Minister of the Environment, Tetsuro Fukuyama, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Teruhiko Mashiko, Senior Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, and Nobumori Otani, Parliamentary Secretary of the Environment approached ministers and other heads of delegations from various countries. Japan participated in and contributed to the negotiations at COP15 through these efforts, and actively expressed its position. Although discussions were often interrupted by fierce confrontations in the course of negotiations, the Copenhagen Accord was reached through summit-level consultations at the last stage of the session among the heads of about 30 states and international organizations. Prime Minister Hatoyama contributed proactively to the establishment of the Copenhagen Accord by taking part in negotiations until late at night and stressing the necessity of forming a political agreement. Almost all the participating countries endorsed the Copenhagen Accord which was reached through summit-level consultations, but some opposed to its adoption for such reasons as lack of transparency in the decision-making process. However, at the final stage, the COP decided to take note of the Copenhagen Accord in order to make this Accord a step for advancing future negotiations.



Prime Minister Hatoyama delivers a speech at COP15 in Copenhagen. Photo : Cabinet Public Relations Office

Major elements of the Copenhagen Accord

- (1) We recognize the scientific view that the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius and enhance our long-term cooperative action.
- (2) Annex I Parties will submit emissions targets for 2020 and non-Annex I Parties will submit mitigation actions to the secretariat by 31 January 2010 in the format given in Appendices I and II respectively.
- (3) Actions taken by Annex I Parties will be subject to MRV (measurement, reporting and verification). Mitigation actions taken voluntarily by non-Annex I Parties will be subject to international consultations and analysis through domestic MRV and their supported mitigation actions will be subject to international MRV.
- (4) The collective commitment by developed countries is to provide new and additional resources to developing countries, approaching USD 30 billion for the period 2010 - 2012, and developed countries commit to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020. We decide to establish the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention.
- (5) We call for an assessment of the implementation of this Accord to be completed by 2015.

Future initiatives

Japan believes it necessary to establish a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies including the United States and China participate, and will work on international negotiations cooperating with other countries so that a new comprehensive legal document is established based on the Copenhagen Accord. At the same time, Japan will carry out specific assistance programs based on the "Hatoyama Initiative", in accordance with the progress of the international negotiations.



Prime Minister Hatoyama inspects photovoltaic power generation panels.



Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Resources

Japan is committed to conserving biodiversity, which supports the life and the ecosystems.

Human beings have gained benefits through the use of Earth's biologically diverse ecosystem such as foods, clean air and waters, and pharmaceuticals. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an issue that mankind has to address for the present and future generations.

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted in time for the UN Conference on Environment and Development ("Earth Summit") in 1992 and entered into force in 1993. It aims to (1) conserve diverse forms of life on the earth and their habitats, (2) ensure the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and (3) ensure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. Parties to the Convention are required to develop national strategy for attaining these objectives and periodically compile reports on measures taken to implement the Convention and their effectiveness.

Japan formulated a national strategy for biodiversity and has revised it on a regular basis. In addition, it established the Basic Act on Biodiversity in 2008, to conserve wild life and its habitats in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, in order to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of resources in developing countries, Japan has provided support through official development assistance (ODA) in such areas as the conservation and management of nature reserves, forest preservation, the prevention of desertification, and the management of natural resources.

Cartagena Protocol

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was adopted in 2000 under the Convention on Biological Diversity and entered into force in 2003. It stipulates import and export procedures for living modified organisms (LMO) and other requirements. In the trading of genetically modified agricultural seeds and seedlings, for example, there is a provision to prohibit their export without the advance informed agreement of the importing country.

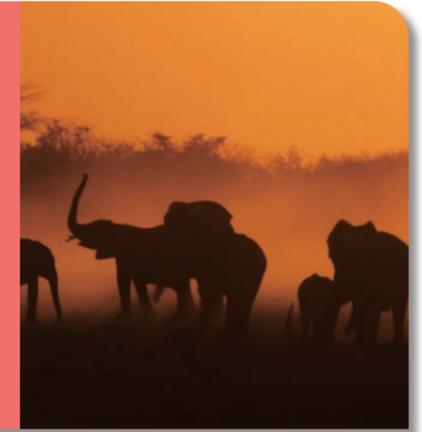


Sustainable management of natural resources contributes to the biodiversity conservation

Protection of Wild Animals and Plants

Japan is committed to protecting wild animals and plants and rich ecosystems.

A great number of animals and plants live on the earth. In recent years, however, an increasing number of species of wild animals and plants have been driven to the verge of extinction due to excessive hunting and the contamination of habitats. In order to conserve biodiversity, it is important to protect wild animals and plants.



Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

With the cooperation of exporting and importing countries, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which entered into force in 1975, aims to regulate international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora in order to protect them.

Approximately 900 species are currently included in Appendix I (which includes species whose trade for commercial purposes is in principle prohibited), and some 33,000 in Appendix II (which includes species whose trade is allowed with the permission of the country that exports them).

Japan has entered reservations with respect to seven species of whale in Appendix I, because their sustainable use is possible and there is no scientific basis for considering these species as endangered.



Golliras are protected under the CITES.



Kushiro Shitsugen (Marshlands) is protected under the Ramsar Convention.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The Convention on Wetland of International Importance, or Ramsar Convention, which came into force in 1975, aims to protect wetlands of international importance as the habitats of waterfowl in particular as well as animals and plants that live there and to promote the wise use of wetlands. Up to now, Japan has designated 37 wetlands, including Kushiro Shitsugen (Marshlands) as Ramsar sites, and supported wetland recovery programs as well as human resource development, public relations, diffusion, and educational activities mainly in the Asian region.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The International Union for Conservation of Nature is a federation of States, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and scientists, which conducts specialized research and studies on a global scale in the fields of the conservation of wild life, as well as the conservation of natural environments and natural resources, makes recommendations and gives advice to the members concerned, and provides support to developing countries and regions. Japan is a State member of the Union.



Giant Pandas are also protected under the CITES.



The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species provides information on the status of endangered animals and plants. (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>)

TOPICS

COP10 and COP-MOP5

The UN General Assembly declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity, and in that year, the achievement for the 2010 Biodiversity Target will be assessed. In October 2010, the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) and the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP5) will take place in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. As the host country of these meetings, Japan has made a proposal for post-2010 biodiversity targets, aiming to achieve satisfactory outcome for this important agenda.

* The 2010 Biodiversity Target, set at COP6 in 2002, aims to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.



CBD COP9 in Bonn, Germany (2008)
(Aichi - Nagoya COP10 CBD Promotion Committee)



Conservation of Forests

The role of forests is becoming increasingly important.

Forests play an important role in the conservation of the global environment and the socio-economic development. Deforestation and forest degradation continue at an alarming rate, especially in tropical rain forests, and promoting sustainable forest management worldwide is an urgent issue to be addressed.

Measures against illegal logging

One of the anthropogenic factors that causes serious deforestation is illegal logging, violating national laws of each country concerned. Based on the principle that illegally harvested timber should not be used, Japan takes the initiative in promoting sustainable forest management, including measures against illegal logging, through a variety of bilateral and multilateral frameworks.

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

Headquartered in Yokohama, Japan, the International Tropical Timber Organization is an international body established in 1986 to achieve both promotion of sustainable management of tropical forests and development of trade in tropical timber. Since Japan is among the world's largest importers of tropical timber,



Japan supports community forest management (Peru)
Photo : A. Gaviria / ITTO

Japan is actively engaged in the policy-making process under ITTO and provides funds to a number of projects based on developing countries' requests.

Asia Forest Partnership (AFP)

Launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 with the initiative of Japan and Indonesia, the Asia Forest Partnership promotes cooperation among governments, international organizations, civil society, and so forth in control of illegal logging, prevention of forest fire, rehabilitation and reforestation of degraded lands, and other activities in order to facilitate sustainable forest management in Asia. In 2008, AFP started Phase 2 in which the Partnership announced its key themes such as enhancing forest cover to cope with climate change and to maintain ecosystems.



Forest fire in Asia

Combatting Desertification

Combatting desertification requires multi-faceted measures that take into consideration poverty and food problems in developing countries and other factors.

Desertification (land degradation) is progressing in various places in the world, including Africa and Asia, due to such diverse factors as human activities (excessive farming and pasturing for example) and climate change. Since social and economic factors, such as poverty and food problems in developing countries, contribute to ongoing desertification, it is necessary to take measures in a wide range of areas taking these factors into account.



Afforestation project in China
(Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA)

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which came into force in 1996, stipulates that countries faced with serious droughts and desertification, particularly those in Africa, should draw up and implement national action programs to combat desertification, and that the developed country parties of the Convention and international organizations should help these countries with such initiatives.

Up to now, Japan has taken support measures to combat desertification through official development assistance (ODA) and other programs. One familiar example is measures taken to alleviate dust and sandstorm, which is carried by winds to Japan, at its source.

Protection of the Ozone Layer

Japan is committed to protecting the ozone layer and safeguarding human beings and ecosystems from harmful ultraviolet rays.

The ozone layer that surrounds the earth absorbs harmful ultraviolet rays. Ozone holes produced by the depletion of the ozone layer are attributed to the use of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) such as chlorofluorocarbons. It is necessary to reduce the production and consumption of ODSs on a global scale.



Vienna Convention

The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer entered into force in 1988 and stipulates the basic framework for international cooperation to protect the ozone layer.

Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer came into force, under the Vienna

Convention, in 1989. It specifies substances that deplete the ozone layer, sets the phase-out schedule for the production and consumption of ODSs, and controls trade of ODSs with non-Parties.

Through the multilateral fund (MLF) established based on this Protocol, Japan assists China, India, Mongolia, and other developing countries in formulating policy for the phase-out of ODSs, facilitates a shift to alternative substances and technologies, and trains engineers.

Wastes and Chemicals

Sound management of hazardous chemicals and wastes is required.



With the advancement of economic activities, huge volumes of chemicals and wastes are being generated daily on a global scale, and hazardous chemicals and wastes have serious effects on human beings and the natural environment. It is necessary to manage these substances appropriately in accordance with international frameworks.

Basel Convention

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, adopted in Basel, Switzerland in 1989 and entered into force in 1992, aims to prevent damage caused by transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal to human health and the natural environment. In recent years, countries have been urged to take measures for e-waste (waste generated from end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment) on an international scale. Japan is contributing proactively to the project on the Environmentally Sound Management of Electrical and Electronic Waste in Asia and the Pacific, which is carried out by the Convention's secretariat.

Stockholm Convention

The objective of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which came into force in 2004, is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs), which are highly toxic, and do not degrade easily, and are widely transported through water and air, as well as accumulate in ecosystems at high concentrations. The Convention stipulates the prohibition of or restriction on production, use, and import/export of POPs - containing agricultural chemicals and industrial materials, as well as the duty to take measures to reduce unintentional emissions of POPs generated in the process of waste incineration. Japan's initiatives related to the Convention include offering

technical knowledge through the POPs Review Committee and hosting workshops on POPs.

Rotterdam Convention

The Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent, which came into force in 2004, stipulates procedures for promoting informed consent by importing countries and information exchange between importing and exporting countries on internationally traded hazardous chemicals. Major provisions include: (1) Parties shall publicly announce whether they can import particular hazardous chemicals, and when such chemicals are exported, they shall be so after obtaining the informed consent of importing countries, and (2) when Parties export chemicals that are strictly controlled in their territory, they shall communicate information on the danger of such chemicals, etc., to importing countries. Japan's initiatives related to the Convention include providing expert knowledge through the Chemicals Review Committee and supporting projects for sound management of asbestos.

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a policy framework for international management of chemicals which aims to achieve the goal of minimizing the adverse effects of production and use of chemicals on human health and the natural environment by 2020. Following the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, SAICM was adopted at the First International Conference on Chemicals Management in 2006. In accordance with the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management and the Overarching Policy Strategy, SAICM lists, as part of its Global Plan of Action, 273 activities that can be carried out by stakeholders to attain the objectives of SAICM. Japan reflects the concept of SAICM on its basic environmental plans and other programs and carries out initiatives to ensure proper chemicals management by holding liaison meetings for related ministries and agencies.



Antarctica

Japan is committed to protecting the valuable environment of Antarctica which mirrors the global environment.

The Antarctic environment which is practically not affected by human activities, is not only valuable in itself but is also extremely important as a research subject. On the other hand, there is concern that the Antarctic environment is deteriorating due to the increasing number of tourists and the effects of climate change in recent years.

Antarctic Treaty

The Antarctic Treaty came into force in 1961 and stipulates peaceful use, freedom of scientific research, promotion of international cooperation, and freeze of claims to territorial sovereignty.



Icebergs have started to melt in Antarctica.

Protocol on Environmental Protection

The Protocol on Environmental Protection came into force in 1998 under the Antarctic Treaty. The Protocol aims to protect the environment and ecosystem of Antarctica in a comprehensive way. Major provisions include prohibition of mineral resources activities, environmental impact assessments, conservation of fauna and flora, disposal and management of waste, prevention of marine pollution, and area protection and management.



Japan's Antarctic research ship "Shirase" (Universal Shipbuilding Corporation)

Initiatives in Asia

In cooperation with neighboring countries, Japan is working to protect the environment in the Asian region.

Protecting the environment in East Asia is extremely important to Japan. In order to solve environmental problems in this region, Japan is actively exercising a wide range of initiatives in cooperation with relevant countries.



Northwest Pacific Action Plan

The Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) was established by Japan, South Korea, China, and Russia in 1994 as part of the Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). In order to protect the marine environment in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea, NOWPAP opened two offices in Toyama, Japan, and Pusan, South Korea, and through cooperation among the four member countries, it is implementing programs such as addressing marine litter problems.

Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia

The Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), which initiated regular-phase operation in 2001, aims at monitoring acid deposition using methods shared by East Asian countries and networking these monitoring activities. Currently, EANET is participated by 13 countries including Japan, South Korea, and China.

Environmental consultation

Japan discusses environmental policy through bilateral consultations such as joint committees on environmental protection with South Korea, China, and Russia, and through multilateral frameworks among Japan, China, South Korea, and other countries.



Students collect garbage thrown up on the shore in Tsushima City, Nagasaki Prefecture.

Environmental ODA

Japan is contributing to ensuring sustainable development through official development assistance (ODA).

It emphasizes developing countries' efforts to cope with global issues including environmental problems and actively supports their efforts through environmental ODA, which utilises Japan's advanced technology and initiatives. Moreover, it gives due consideration to the impacts of development on the environment so that they are minimized in all ODA projects.

Environmental ODA policy

In its Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter and Medium-term Policy on ODA, Japan views efforts to address global issues including environmental problems as one of its priorities issues. In addition, as part of its policy for individual issues in the environmental field, it has so far announced the Kyoto Initiative (measures for supporting developing countries in taking measures to cope with global warming; 1997), the Environmental Conservation Initiative for Sustainable Development (EcoSD; 2002), Water and Sanitation Broad Partnership Initiative (WASABI; 2006), the Cool Earth Partnership (2008), and the "Hatoyama Initiative" (2009), which was developed by restructuring the Cool Earth Partnership. Through these policies, it is implementing environmental ODA to cope with global warming, environmental pollution and the conservation of the natural environment.

Environment-friendly ODA

In order to assure fairness in formulating and implementing its ODA, Japan pays great attention with respect to factors such as environment and social impacts on developing countries. To this end, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), an implementing Agency of the Japanese ODA, has prepared the relevant guidelines and endeavors to ensure environment and social considerations in ODA projects.



JICA is implementing a tree-planting project in the Philippines. By courtesy of Kenshiro Imamura, JICA

Supporting Activities of International Organizations and Funds

Japan actively supports comprehensive and cross-sectional environmental initiatives.

In order to deal with environmental problems, which are expanding on a global scale, Japan is also active in cooperating with international organizations and funds. These frameworks provide valuable assistance when various countries take environmental measures.

United Nations Environmental Programme

Based on a resolution of the UN General Assembly in 1972, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was established as an organization that addresses environmental issues in a comprehensive manner within the framework of UN. It plays an important role in such fields as formulating international environmental agreements, monitoring the global environment, and supporting developing countries. Ever since the establishment of UNEP, Japan has been a member of the Governing Council, the decision-making body of UNEP. In 1992, the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre was inaugurated, and its offices were established in Osaka and Shiga. The Centre implements projects aimed at transferring environmental technology to developing countries.

Global Environmental Facility

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) is the world's largest international fund, that grants funds and technical assistance to help developing countries and emerging economies cope with global environmental problems in a sustainable way. It also serves as a financing mechanism for the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Japan is the second largest donor to GEF after the United States.



Water supply under UNEP Iraqi Marshlands Project. (UNEP-IETC)