

Global Warming and the Kyoto Protocol

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Japan, as the country which hosted the Third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP3), has at every opportunity made substantial efforts towards urging Russia and the United States, the two key states for the entry into force of the Protocol, to ratify it. Japan cordially welcomes Russia's decision to ratify the Protocol and is very pleased that the Protocol shall enter into force. Japan recognizes the need to promote policies and measures to tackle climate change and is determined to carry them out. Climate change is a problem which is already manifesting itself, with extreme climatic events, including floods, droughts, heat waves and violent hurricanes occurring all over the world. Japan too experienced a record-breaking heat wave in the summer of 2004, with central Tokyo reaching a record high temperature of 39.5 °C. In addition, the city counted 70 days on which the daily high temperature exceeded 30 °C. To add to this, the number of typhoons striking Japan was at a record high and their intensity and scale were extremely large, causing serious damage including a large number of casualties. Since climate change is recognized as a long-term phenomenon, it is impossible to state unequivocally whether those extreme climatic events are attributable to climate change. However, if climate change proceeds, it is projected that the frequency and scale of these events are likely to become increasingly serious. Insofar as climate change would bring about serious implications such as these, international society has been taking steady steps to address it. In addition to the continued implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which constitutes the basis for climate change measures, international society will take another step forward through the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. Japan will continuously urge the United States, Australia, and other countries which have not ratified the Protocol to ratify it. Also, through cooperation with other nations with regard to Joint Implementation and the Clean Development Mechanism stipulated under the Protocol, Japan will make a contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in those nations. At the same time, in consideration of the global increase in the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases, it is necessary to take second and third steps to follow up on this first step of commitments through 2012 stipulated under the Protocol. Addressing climate change requires us to reduce anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases in the medium to long term by more than half. In order to achieve this goal, Japan is committed to promoting further dialogue with developing nations, in which substantial increases in greenhouse gas emissions are expected, as well as with developed nations. Japan is also committed to promoting international negotiations proactively with regard to the climate regime for 2013 and beyond.