

Global Warming and the Ministry of the Environment

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The Government of Japan ratified the Kyoto Protocol in June 2002. In order to achieve its 6% reduction commitment under the Kyoto Protocol, it has also formulated the Climate Change Policy Program. Based on this Program, a number of policies and measures have been formulated and implemented. Recent data shows that Japan's greenhouse gas emissions significantly exceed those of the base year and that additional policies and measures are needed. Additional policies and measures, including a mandatory greenhouse gas accounting and reporting system, a voluntary emissions trading scheme and a climate change tax, have been proposed. In assuring the attainment of our commitments, we are committed to promoting dialogues with stakeholders further with regard to the introduction of these policies and measures and to making every effort to finalize the new Government agenda. To accomplish our Kyoto commitments, Japan's national government, local governments, industries, NGOs and citizens each need to take actions for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, taking ownership of the attainment of the Kyoto commitment as one of their own goals. Also, from a mid- to long-term perspective, we need to shift Japanese society to one which emits less greenhouse gas-that is, to a society which addresses climate change. In doing so, we believe that Japan can lead the world by utilizing its depth of experience and its excellent technologies with regard to conserving energy and curbing pollution. For example, hybrid vehicles which were originally developed in Japan have already become popular around the world, contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions on a global scale. Here at the beginning of the 21st century, we are on the verge of taking on a new challenge. I would like to ask all Japanese and international society to make concerted efforts to actively participate in activities to combat climate change. Japan is committed to leading with regard to this new challenge.