

23 November 2004

Tokyo Declaration on Toxics Free Earth

[Background]

A great many manmade chemicals have brought tremendous benefits to mankind, but at the same time, we have ended up polluting both our bodies and the Earth as a whole with previously non-existent chemicals. There is much evidence to suggest a causal relationship between this pollution and the increase in recent years in cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, asthma, allergies, reproductive and nervous system development disorders, and so forth. We urgently need to revise existing chemical management practices that have allowed the extensive use of chemicals whose safety has not been confirmed, and do not enable prompt and appropriate response even in the case of chemicals known to be harmful.

[International developments]

This issue was covered in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit, which recommended that national governments should consider adopting precautionary, anticipatory and life-cycle approaches to chemical management, and policies based on producer liability principles. The EU's Council of Europe led the world in ordering a review of chemical management regulations, as a result of which REACH (Registration, Evaluation, and Authorization of Chemicals), a proposal for a new EU chemicals regulatory framework based on precautionary principles, was drafted in October 2003, and its contents are currently being considered.

[Developments in Japan]

Surpassed only by the EU and America as a producer of chemicals, Japan has a tragic track record of chemical management that includes the Minamata and Kanemi Yusho disasters, and even today, the ailments and disorders mentioned above as showing close links to chemical pollution are steadily increasing. However, the Japanese government is not only making no attempt to revise existing policies through initiatives similar to the EU's REACH, but is in fact joining hands with America in an effort to weaken REACH.

Towards a toxic free Earth

Insofar as chemicals can be transported freely across national borders, cooperation between all of the nations of the world in implementing common chemical management reforms is vital to the creation of a world that is unpolluted by chemicals, and it is particularly important that the EU, America and Japan, which among them account for 70% of global chemical manufacture, take the lead in such initiatives.

Consequently, we citizens of Japan make the following requests with respect to the EU and Japan:

1. EU

We endorse the EU's REACH initiative as a major first step on the path to creating an Earth unpolluted by harmful chemicals, and strongly beseech the EU to steadfastly implement REACH without compromising its original purpose of ensuring a

high level of safety with respect to both human health and the natural environment.

2. Japanese government

We ask the Japanese government and private industry members opposing REACH to forthwith abandon their efforts to interfere in REACH implementation, which are aimed at serving their short-term interests at the expense of human health and environmental safety. We ask that they rather work with concerned citizens to promptly conduct a comprehensive revision of Japan's system for the regulation of chemicals, paying due consideration to the following points:

- (1) Promotion of the use of safer alternatives to existing chemicals, based on precautionary principles.
- (2) Termination of the use of chemicals whose safety has not been proven.
- (3) Shifting of burden of proof that a substance is harmless from government authorities to producers, and strengthening of the principle of producer liability
- (4) Assurance of citizen's rights of access to information, including full disclosure of chemicals contained in products and so forth
- (5) Institutionalization of public participation in the drafting of regulations and other aspects of policy making

This Tokyo Declaration was launched at the REACH Seminar for Toxics Free Earth held on November 23, 2004 at Tokyo, Japan with some 160 participants organized by the following Non Governmental Organizations:

[Citizens against Chemicals Pollution](#)

[Greenpeace Japan](#)

[Japan Occupational Safety and Health Resource Center \(JOSHRC\)](#)

[People's Association on Countermeasures of Dioxin & Endocrine Disruptors](#)

Toxic Watch Network
WWF Japan