

Long-Term Planning

Despite the problems associated with competing interests in environmental policy and economic development, Japan has been able to make significant advances in long-term planning. Its hundred year plan, "Earth Action-21" (attached as Appendix 3), is an attempt to develop a cohesive, long-term strategy that which will facilitate the protection of the planet. It combines the development of new technology and environmental reclamation measures such as reforestation.

This type of long-term planning has been made possible by the decision-making process itself. In the following passage, taken from seminar transcripts, Ambassador Chiba was able to provide Canadian participants with an insight into this process:

...in Japan we have (a) consensus process (that) varies from time to time and issue to issue... However, there is one common thread... we don't jump into our pronouncements right away without talking to various parties. But the actual process is very different from time to time.... (for example) there will be lots of talk between young bureaucrats of different ministries... and between young people in various organizations which have a bearing on the decision. ...these talks seep upstairs in those organizations and eventually reach the ministers. By that time, however, the talk would already be going to the trade unions, and the junior members of the trade union hierarchy would be talking to the junior officials in the labour ministry...this talk will be fed back... and also go upstairs. By the time it gets upstairs all the great captains of industry will know about it, but when first asked about it by the ministers they feign surprise and say "we have to think about that"... one day you get a

leak in the newspaper. Now this leak is sometimes coordinated, sometimes uncoordinated, but it is in the main direction and not completely wild. By the time that you read about the leak... the initiated will know people have been talking for two or three years about it already....basically if we are very careful about things and... talk very discreetly at the right levels I think we might get a consensus.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION - ALTERNATIVES TO LEGISLATION

Japan employs an interesting combination of legislative and non-legislative measures to effect environmental protection. In the non-legislative category, financial incentives and voluntary self-regulation account for much of industrial Japan's impetus to develop new technology and act in an environmentally positive manner.

Pollution Taxes

As illustrated by the reduction of SO₂ in Japan after the implementation of emission taxes, it is clear that this type of mechanism can work as an environmental protection mechanism. Other countries have also experimented with pollution taxes. In the United States, the trading of emission credits was used to help achieve a reduction in the lead content of gasoline. As well, the US Clean Air Act is utilizing trading permits in an attempt to achieve a 50% reduction in acid-forming emissions. This