

Appendix 4

Keidanren Global Environment Charter

Keidanren
April 23, 1991

Introduction

The Japanese government and industrial world have been actively striving to protect the environment, promote health and safety, and use energy and resources more efficiently ever since pollution became a problem in the high-growth 1960s and especially since the two oil crises of the 1970s. Japan now has some of the most advanced technologies and systems in the world to reduce industrial pollution, enhance safety and hygiene, and conserve energy and other resources.

Yet today's environmental problems are too critical to be dealt with solely through measures to prevent industrial pollution. If we are to minimize the load on the environment from, for example, waste disposal and water pollution generated in cities, society itself must be fundamentally changed. We must radically revise various social and economic systems, such as the layout of cities and the arrangement of transport networks, and we must also upgrade social infrastructure and, indeed, raise the consciousness of citizenry.

On the international agenda are such world-scale problems as global warming, the depletion of tropical rain forests, desertification, acid rain, pollution of the oceans. The international community's response to the problem of global warming in particular will be having profound effects on our ways of life and business. Naturally, there must be overall measures taken, but technological breakthroughs will also be necessary. The problems are such that no country alone can come up with all the answers.

The task before us is not merely one of rethinking the problems caused by the pursuit of affluence in a culture that encourages mass consumption; we must also come to grips with the global problems of poverty and population increase, aiming to hand over to future generations a healthy environment that allows sustainable development on a global scale. The governments, companies, and people of each nation must become more aware of their roles in this endeavour. People throughout the world must join hands to create new social and economic systems that allow the advancement of the welfare of all