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Draft EPA Report on U.S. Climate Policies Open for Review Before Submission  
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Draft EPA Report on U.S. Climate Policies Open for Review Before Submission  
to U.N.

The Bush administration is preparing to provide the U.N. Framework  
Convention on Climate Change detailed information on national greenhouse  
gas

emission inventories and their climate change impacts, an Environmental  
Protection Agency official said Nov. 14.

A draft report communicating the most recent U.S. action on climate change,  
including new policies, projects, measures, and inventories, is expected to  
be open to public scrutiny Nov. 15, before the Bush administration must  
submit it under the U.N. convention.

All but one chapter, "Projections and Effects of Policies and Measures," is  
expected to be published in the Federal Register Nov. 15 and available for  
comment for 30 days before the administration submits it to the United  
Nations as the Climate Action Report required for all signatory nations to  
the convention.

Many Differences Since Last Report

Reid Harvey, of EPA's Office of Atmospheric Programs, told BNA Nov. 14 that  
much of the information contained in the third Climate Action Report  
differs

from the information included in the last report submitted in 1997.

Many of the differences stem from new U.N. guidelines for reporting, which  
call for more specific projections and details. However, Harvey said, since  
the U.S. agencies have required more improved, comprehensive inventories  
from industry sectors and completed a national climate change assessment in  
2000, the latest Climate Action Report also will offer a better assessment  
of U.S. vulnerability to climate change and how the United States could  
adapt.

The report will provide updates on measures and policies implemented under the Clinton administration as well as policies initiated under the Bush administration. For example, according to the EPA announcement, the report will provide information gathered since President Bush's June announcement of his intention to implement policies enhancing research and technology.

#### Observation Techniques

In addition, Harvey said an item not in the previous report that will appear in the upcoming report is information on what the United States is doing to observe global climate systems, such as the use of satellites, and sea- and land-based monitoring. Draft chapters of the third Climate Action Report are expected to be available on EPA's national communication Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/publications/natcom.html> after a notice for public comment is published Nov. 15 in the Federal Register, according to Harvey.

By Pamela Najor

#### Japan Prepares to Launch Ratification, Implementation Proceedings for Kyoto Pact

TOKYO--Just days after climate change talks in Morocco ended, the Japanese government Nov. 12 agreed to begin "full-scale preparations" for implementing the domestic measures needed to meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets outlined in the Kyoto Protocol, including sectorial quotas and higher taxes for heavy polluters.

At its Nov. 12 meeting, the Global Warming Prevention Headquarters chaired by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi agreed to review the nation's current Outline for Global Warming Prevention.

It also agreed to "implement full-scale preparations" for submitting the legislation needed to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the Prime Minister's Office announced.

The global warming group, created shortly before climate change talks started in Morocco at the end of October, is one of many ad hoc government committees reviewing Japan's climate change strategy, officials said.

The headquarters group also called on the Japanese people to adopt lifestyles that are more friendly to the environment, and it urged industry to develop technologies that are more energy-efficient and that release fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

Government sources said the Koizumi government plans to introduce the various pieces of Kyoto-linked legislation one by one starting early in 2002.

The Kyoto Protocol to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change calls for industrialized nations to collectively cut their emissions by 5.2 percent compared to 1990 levels by 2012. The pact calls on Japan to reduce its greenhouse gas output by 6 percent based on 1990 levels.

#### Government Eyes Taxes, Quotas

Further, the meeting also suggested that the Japanese government would impose environmental taxes and levies on heavy greenhouse gas emitters. "We will aim to adjust or establish domestic structures that contribute to both the environment and the economy, leading also to the economic vitalization of Japan, utilizing ideas and creativity of the economic sector," the group said.

Officials of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry told BNA that, in the planned legislation, Japan will seek to set greenhouse gas emission reduction quotas for every industry, and in the case of leading corporations, for every company.

The legislation--which Japan plans to enact before the September 2002 start of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg--would establish industry-by-industry reduction targets or energy consumption reduction targets.

Those targets, officials agreed, would be based in part on voluntary reduction targets worked out by the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren) shortly after the Kyoto Protocol was struck in December 1997.

METI officials added that, while they hope to put the legislation in place in 2002, the ministry plans to include a grace period of about three years, meaning the laws' standards would not come into force before 2004.

#### Role of Flexible Mechanisms

A deal reached Nov. 10 in Morocco gives in to Japan and Russia on key points involving compliance and flexible mechanisms such as carbon sinks and emissions trading.

This will enable Japan to meet its 6 percent reduction target using carbon sinks--that is, forests and agricultural land that absorbs carbon dioxide emissions, as well as emissions trading schemes and the clean development mechanism.

Of the 6 percent reduction required of Japan by the accord, the nation will be permitted to use carbon sinks to achieve a 3.7 percent reduction and emissions trading and use of the clean development mechanism--designed to be a clearinghouse for emission offset programs in developing countries sponsored by governments or private firms from the industrialized nations--to achieve a 1.8 percent reduction.

