

Life in **Harmony**, Into the Future

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, from October 18 to 29 this year. The Japan Journal's Osamu Sawaji spoke with **Tsunao Watanabe**, Co-Secretary General of the Government of Japan for COP10, about the aims of the meeting.

The Aichi-Nagoya meeting is the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity since the first one was held at Nassau in the Bahamas in 1994. In what way is the situation for biodiversity around the world changing?

Tsunao Watanabe: Unfortunately, biodiversity on the planet is still being lost at an unprecedented speed. In 2002, the 2010 Biodiversity Target was adopted at COP6 in The Hague in the Netherlands with the stated aim being “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduc-

tion of the current rate of biodiversity loss.” In 2004, at COP7, a framework of evaluation comprising seven principal goals and twenty-one sub-targets was adopted. However, in *Global Biodiversity Outlook 3* released this May, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity states that none of the sub-targets has been achieved globally.

Seeing that this is the situation worldwide, what are the principal themes of the discussions at COP10?

Grounded on reflection as to why we have not been able to achieve the 2010 target, one important theme of COP10 is to establish a practical strategic plan. Countries including Japan have submitted proposals for post-2010 targets to the Secretariat and discussion will be conducted about the proposals made by the Secretariat based on these.

Another important theme is Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of genetic resources.



Tsunao Watanabe, Co-Secretary General of the Government of Japan for COP10



Since 2002, there have been ongoing discussions on what kind of international framework to create in relation to ABS. However, as of the present time, there are still quite a few points where no agreement has been reached between developing countries, which are the principal providers of genetic resources, and the developed countries, which are the principal utilizing countries, including how to create a framework for complying with the rules on utilization and sharing benefits of genetic resources. At COP 10, Japan will maximize efforts to create a framework that works to the advantage of both sides, guaranteeing seamless use of genetic resources while returning benefits gained from the utilization of genetic resources to the providers of the resources.

What biodiversity initiatives has Japan undertaken in the past?

The parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are required to draft a national strategy on biodiversity. Japan drafted its first National Biodiversity Strategy in 1995, revised

in 2002 and 2007. Biodiversity in Japan is confronted with four crises, namely, the crisis of species and habitat degradation due to excessive human activity and development, the crisis of the degradation of *satoyama* due to insufficient levels of management, the crisis of ecosystem disturbances caused by introduced alien species, and the crisis caused by global warming. Japan is now promoting the Centennial Plan, which will restore in the next 100 years the biodiversity that has been damaged at such a rapid pace due to the exploitation and destruction of the ecosystem of the past 100 years. The outcome of the Plan will be a society where the protection of biological diversity and sustainable use are compatible.

The 2010 revisions to the National Biodiversity Strategy were the first to set specific target years in line with Japan's proposal on the post-2010 targets. The measures include short-term targets by 2020, mid to long-term targets by 2050 as well as about 720 specific measures with thirty-five numerical indicators.

Taking the opportunity of the COP10,

please tell us about the contributions that Japan is continuing to make to the international community.

First, in order to achieve the post-2010 targets, we want to continue to support emerging nations by utilizing Japan's experience. For example, since there are still many developing nations among the signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity that have not drafted and revised a national strategy, at present, Japan is in discussions with the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat about creating a

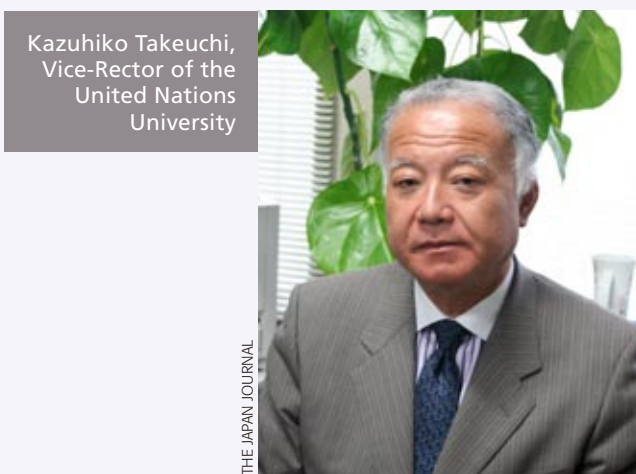
"Japan Fund" with the aim of training human resources who play a part in producing national strategies and deal with the issue of biodiversity for each country. Japan is also advocating the Satoyama Initiative to realize sustainable use of resources in harmony with nature by making use of the wisdom of natural symbiosis in the world including satoyama in Japan.

Since 1973, Japan has been monitoring the natural environment of land, rivers, lakes and marshes, and sea for what is called a Green Census. We believe that the knowledge of survey methods and analytical techniques that we

The Satoyama Initiative

The sustainable use of biodiversity will be an important theme at COP10 with particular relevance for the Satoyama Initiative, which is promoted by the Government of Japan (Ministry of the Environment) in cooperation with the UN University Institute of Advanced Studies (based in Yokohama).

Kazuhiko Takeuchi, vice-rector of the United Nations University, who has been involved in drafting the Satoyama Initiative, comments, "Japan has this wonderful *satoyama* structure but the purpose of the Satoyama Initiative is not to try to disseminate it worldwide. Rather, the Satoyama Initiative collects examples of structures similar to the satoyama in other countries and, by comparing them, aims to discover shared strategies for improving the welfare



of human beings using ecosystem services while protecting biodiversity."

For Japanese people, the satoyama were places for obtaining foods. They also used to be places for harvesting firewood, coal and other fuel, or the raw materials for pharmaceuticals and tools for daily life. At the same time, people created a sustainable structure where resources were successfully rotated

have built up for these Green Censuses can contribute to reinforcing the scientific foundations for biodiversity worldwide.

In addition, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) undertakes research on the issues of global warming and now there is some headway toward establishing the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to make scientific proposals on biodiversity similar to those of the IPCC. Japan is proactively making a contribution to strengthening such science-policy interfaces.



on a fixed cycle without taking too much from the satoyama.

Similar to the satoyama in Japan, there are harmonious structures in many countries around the world where people and nature exist in balance. In Korea they are called *maeul*, in Spain, *dehesa*, and in France, *terroir*.

However, these structures are faced with a critical situation worldwide and in Japan. The crisis is caused by over-use, whereby natural resources are used excessively, or its opposite, under-use, whereby they have fallen into disuse.

Takeuchi comments, "Neither over-use nor under-use of natural resources can sustain biological diversity. It is the goal of the Satoyama Initiative to clarify where the point of balance lies, or the halfway point, as one might say. This research is extreme-

ly important in light of development in emerging nations."

As a first trial, Japan and the UN University Institute of Advanced Studies are presently undertaking research into the satoyama in Japan with the results to be reported at COP10.

The official proposal for the Satoyama Initiative will be made at COP 10 and there are plans to incorporate it with activities related to the Convention.

Takeuchi comments, "At COP10, we must turn the Convention on Biological Diversity into a pact that actually moves matters forward. In that sense, Japan's role as the host nation is extremely important. We would also like to convey a strong message that the Satoyama Initiative is something that can change society."