



Cool Earth Day

The seventh day of the seventh month is a significant date for many Japanese people—this is the day of Tanabata, the Star Festival. Starting this year, July 7 has also become Cool Earth Day in Japan.

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda put forward the idea in a speech entitled “In Pursuit of Japan as a Low-carbon Society,” which he gave at the Nip-

pon Press Center Building, Tokyo, in June. With the G8 Toyako Hokkaido Summit slated for the following month, Fukuda used his speech to clearly state Japan’s stance on the environment, which was to be a major topic for discussion at the summit.

“The G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit will begin on July 7, which is the day of the Tanabata festival,” he



but a day for all Japanese citizens to make various efforts to remind themselves of the path they should take towards a low-carbon society."

That night, lights were turned off not just at the summit venue in Hokkaido, but across the whole country. Some 76,000 public facilities and attractions such as Tokyo Tower and Yokohama Bay Bridge were wrapped in the gentle darkness of the summer night. For the Japanese people, who are so used to everything being lit up at night, the darkness was a chance to appreciate just how much lighting they use and to think about the implications of this for global warming.

LEFT: Electric lights were turned off at an event held in Muroran City, Hokkaido at the time of the G8 Summit. Candle holders made from empty PET bottles were used.

BELOW: The lights of Tokyo Tower were turned off on the night of July 7.

said. "There is a movement underway to encourage people around the country to turn their lights off all together that night, admire the beauty of the Milky Way and remind ourselves of the importance of the earth's environment. This should not be a one-off event. I thus wish to designate 7 July as 'Cool Earth Day' and make it a day not just to turn off the lights,

