



Results of Second
"Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and Survival of Humankind"
Focus on Agenda 21

Asahi Glass Foundation
September 30, 1993

The Asahi Glass Foundation has published a report containing the results of a questionnaire concerning global environmental problems that it conducted in Japan and throughout the world in May of this year.

Surveyed were members of government organizations (GOs) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) registered with the United Nations conference on Environment and Development, or Earth Summit, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The Foundation selected 20 issues from Agenda 21, a list of concrete measures adopted at the summit to realize sustainable development throughout the world, and asked respondents to rate the current state of these issues and what was the level of progress since the Earth Summit. As there have been many ways Agenda 21 has been approached, opinions differ on how much has been achieved. To our knowledge, however, this is the only comprehensive, international survey to record the current state of Agenda 21.

The questionnaire also investigated further key issues that were identified in the first questionnaire conducted last year, such as overpopulation, environmental education and the contribution of science and technology.

Time period: Questionnaires were sent out from May 6, 1993, and had to be returned by mail or fax by June 30, 1993.

Number of questionnaires mailed: 2,550 (187 countries and regions)

Number of questionnaires returned: 282 (82 countries and regions)

Rate of return: 11%

Questionnaire sample: Selected at random from members of governmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations who registered with UNCED held in June 1992.

The following results should be read in conjunction with the Questionnaire on Environmental Issues.

I. Progress on and Current State of Agenda 21

- Rising environmental consciousness of citizens, local governments and industry
- No progress on basic problems, such as overpopulation, poverty and capital mechanisms

Respondents evaluated the progress of and the current state of 20 major issues selected from Agenda 21

[Percentages refer to the sum of some progress and significant progress]

- (1) An increase in environmental awareness is indicated by the following percentages: environmental education (70%), activities by local governments and citizens' groups (62%), and raising of industry's awareness (58%). Over 50% of respondents also selected introduction of government regulations to conserve the environment (55%), science and technologies contribution toward solving environmental problems (56%), and international cooperative efforts toward sustainable development in the developing countries (51%) as areas where progress had taken. Progress was also reported on concrete policies to tackle environmental problems, such as policies to protect the ozone layer (48%) and policies to preserve the earth's

biodiversity (50%). However, the respondents evaluated the current state of these issues positively at around the 25%.

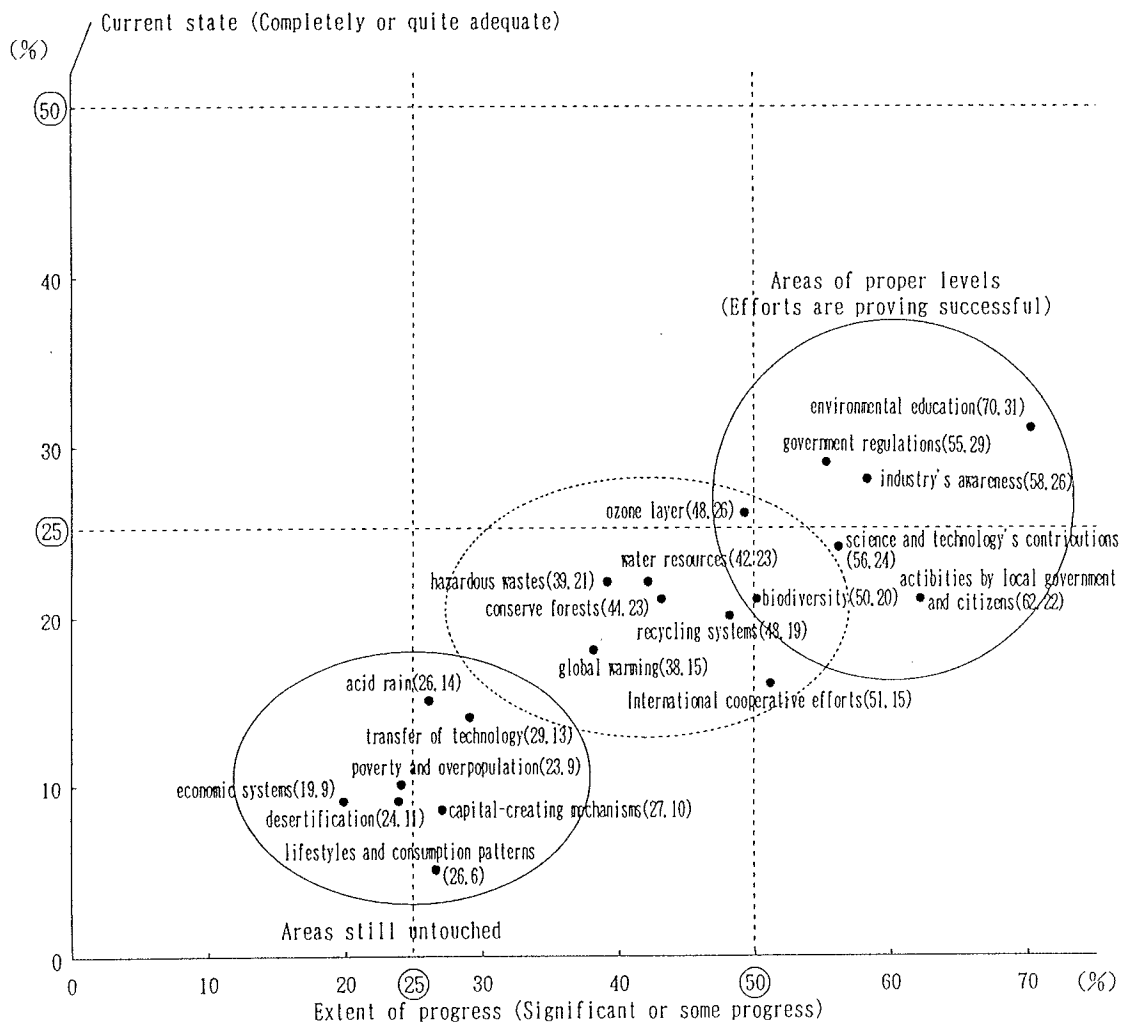
- (2) Minimal progress was reported on efforts to solve basic problems, such as poverty and overpopulation (23%), efforts to establish the necessary capital-creating mechanisms for the preservation of the environment (27%), and efforts involving the transfer of environmental-conservation technology (29%).-- issues closely influenced by international politics. Issues concerning industrial activities and the everyday activities of citizens were rated as follows: changes to economic systems leading to greater conservation of the environment (19%) and efforts to alter lifestyles and consumption patterns (26%). Respondents also rated lowly the state of concrete measures to solve environmental problems, such as policies to reduce acid rain (26%) and policies to combat desertification (24%).

Overall the current state of these areas is inadequate, meaning that there are still areas untouched.

- (3) Respondents in Japan generally rated the current state of the 20 issues higher than respondents from other countries. However, not even the responses from Japan reached a satisfactory level. (See page 5 of the Results Report)
- (4) Members of NGOs from various countries were harsher in their evaluation of the rate of progress and current state than evaluations by members of GOs. (See page 4 and 5 of the Results Report)

Agenda21: Progress and Current State

<Total of 8 regions>



Notes:

- The axis of the abscissa indicates the extent of progress as calculated by the total scores of "some progress" and "significant progress," while the axis of ordinate indicates the current state totally the scores of "quite adequate" and "completely adequate."
- Two figures in brackets following the area description show the ratios in the extent of progress and the current state, respectively, as referred to in 1. above.
- Area descriptions are shortened. For full descriptions, refer to those in the questionnaire.

2. Concern about the survival prospects of humankind in light of the deterioration of the environment

- Western Europeans and Northern Americans extremely concerned; respondents from Japan, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union slightly optimistic

From the following categories, 0:00-3:00: not concerned at all; 3:01-6:00: slightly concerned; 6:01-9:00: quite concerned; 9:01-12:00: extremely concerned, respondents indicated their level of concern. This year's average time was 8:19 compared with 7:49 for the previous year, indicating that the level of concern is increasing.

On a regional basis, respondents who replied extremely concerned were Western Europe (53%), North America (50%) compared with Japan (23%), Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (15%). (See page 26 of the Results Report)

3. Changes in lifestyles

- Over half of respondents reported that they could adapt to or already were leading a more frugal lifestyle
- Japanese respondents slightly skeptical

In response to the question can you change from a overconsumption-throwaway lifestyle, 58% said they could or were already adapting. Japanese respondents were the most unwilling group to adapt with 21% of pollees replying that change would be difficult. (See page 27 of the Results Report)

4. Solutions the developed countries and international organizations should implement to solve overpopulation in the developing countries

- Need to promote family planning and raise the general level of education
- Disparity in ideas regarding strategies between developed and developing nations

From 10 choices respondents selected in order of importance solutions to the overpopulation problem. Solutions that developed countries and international organizations should provide as aid to the developing countries were also listed.

(1) Family planning (82%), increase the general level of and the number of people receiving education (82%), raising the rate of economic growth and standard of living in the developing countries (66%) and heightening women's status in society (65%) were the top four solutions to counter overpopulation. Areas where aid should be provided were increase the general level of and the number of people receiving education (68%), raising the rate of economic growth and standard of living in the developing countries (66%) and expanding alternative forms of energy and securing adequate supplies of water and food (58%).

[Percentage refers to the total of responses ranked in the top four]

(2) Regarding solutions the developed countries and international organizations should provide, family planning was highly ranked in all geographical regions, especially by the developed nations of North America and Western Europe, however, respondents in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Latin America ranked education and promoting economic growth higher. This indicates a disparity between the way of thinking between the developed countries and developing countries regarding ways to deal with the problem of overpopulation. (See page 29 of the Results Report)

5. Importance of Environmental Education

- Emphasis on implementation rather than initial discussion
- Education should be directed at elementary, junior and senior high school students

From eight choices, respondents chose in order of importance strategies for the promotion of environmental education. Ahead of establishing consensus about the content and focus of the curriculum for people of varying socioeconomic groups (42%), respondents favored developing educational resources and methods and enriching educational programs (77%), increasing the number and quality of people promoting education

(64%) and establishing systems and organizations that will result in the furthering of education (57%). This indicates that environmental education has progressed beyond the initial discussion stage and has reached the implementation stage. A large number of respondents chose elementary, junior high and senior high school students as those who should receive environmental education. (See page 33 of the Results Report)

[Percentage refers to the total of responses ranked in the top four]

6. Science and technology's contribution to the solving of environmental problems

- **Need for interdisciplinary approach, methods of evaluating research results and policies for science and technology**

Of the seven categories, activate an interdisciplinary cultural and natural sciences approach toward the environment was the first choice of 80% of respondents. Also, to establish clear strategies and goals for science and technology and establish methods of evaluating scientific results from the viewpoint of environmental preservation were each given priority by 74% of respondents. These choices indicate the importance of policies and methodology. (Refer to page 35 of the questionnaire Results Report.)

[Percentage refers to the total of responses ranked in the top four]

7. Effective economic measures and regulations

- **Regulations such as emission controls and environment tax were most supported**
- **Japanese respondents supported self-imposed restrictions**

Choosing from 11 categories, respondents displayed the following tendencies:

- (1) Sixty-nine percent of respondents supported regulations to limit industrial activities that harm the environment as most effective and 61% chose an environment tax or a system that allows tax reductions for corporations working to reduce the negative environmental effects of their activities. These choices indicate support for orthodox methods to deal with environmental problems.

[Percentage refers to the total of responses ranked in the top four]

- (2) The creation of deposit refund and recycling programs was considered more effective by respondents from Japan, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union than by those from North America, Western Europe and Oceania.
- (3) Support for the introduction of discriminatory pricing to promote purchases of more environment-friendly products came from respondents in North America and Western Europe.
- (4) Self-imposed restrictions and self monitoring by corporations and industry was generally not supported as an effective means of solving environmental problems, but it did receive substantial support from respondents in Japan.

(Refer to page 38 of the questionnaire Results Report for information on items (2)–(4) above.)

8. Influence of Eastern philosophy on global civilization

- **Expectations of a new, hybrid Eastern philosophy**

From four options, 28% of respondents believe that Eastern philosophy will embrace other thought systems, resulting in a new, hybrid Eastern philosophy. Twenty percent believe that current Western thought will influence the entire world. Respondents who chose the first response came chiefly from Japan, other parts of Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, while those who chose the second were for the most part situated in North and Latin America, Western Europe and Africa. The results naturally reflect the historical and cultural orientations of the respondents. (See page 39 of Results Report)

For more detailed information, refer to the questionnaire results report. The report not only covers numerical data, but also features written comments from respondents. Valuable insights were provided by representatives of governmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations worldwide. The English version of the report will be available from October 8, people interested in obtaining a copy should contact the Asahi Glass Foundation at the below address.

On November 3, 1993, in the International Conference Hall at the United Nations University, Tokyo, lectures will be given by winners of the second annual Blue Planet Prize and a symposium will be held on the theme of "The Study of the Survival Conditions of Humankind – New Perspectives on the Population Problem." The results of this questionnaire will also be discussed. You are cordially invited to attend both events.

All enquiries regarding the questionnaire results, Blue Planet prize winners and symposium should be directed to:

**Hiroya Hirano, Director of Commendation
The Asahi Glass Foundation
Bank of Tokyo Building, 12th Floor,
4-2, Marunouchi 1-chome,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan
Phone: +81-3-3285-0591
Fax : +81-3-3285-0592**