

World Raises Cry to Save the Global Environment

“Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and the Survival of Humankind”

Eight-Year Synopsis

March 2000

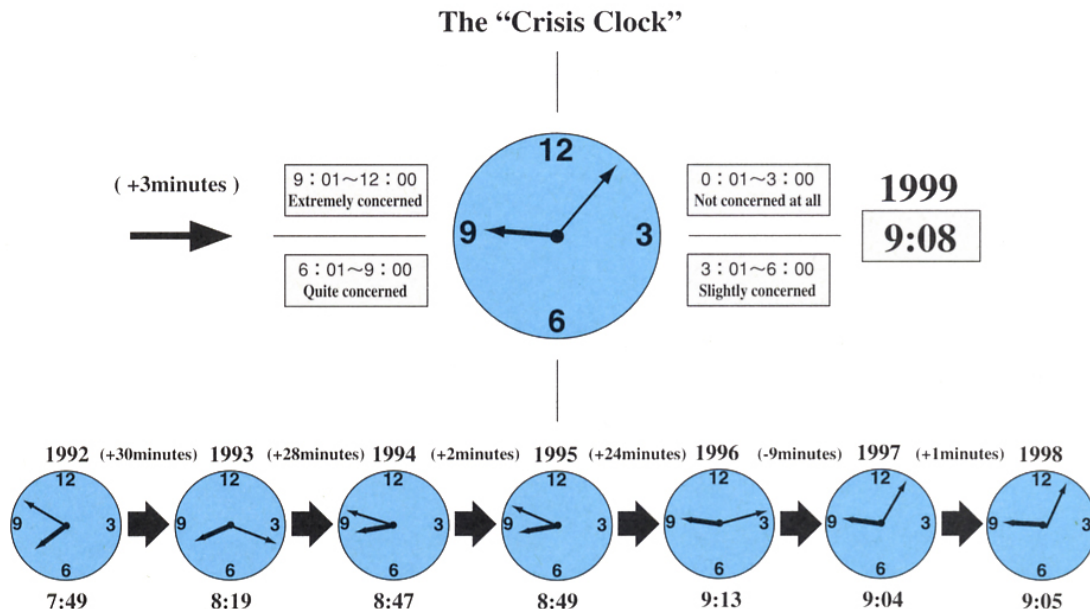
THE ASAHI GLASS FOUNDATION

In the eight years that have passed since the Earth Summit, efforts to deal with global environmental problems have increased in importance and urgency. Since 1992, the Asahi Glass Foundation has conducted an annual Questionnaire on Environmental Problems and the Survival of Humankind among experts—researchers, members of government organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world—and compiled and published the results.

This report presents a synopsis of information about the opinions on environmental issues that a total of 4,826 respondents to the survey shared with us. In particular, we feature data on the survey’s most important items—those dealing with humankind’s survival crisis, Agenda 21, global warming, lifestyle alteration and carbon taxes. This report is an update of the Six-Year Synopsis issued two years previously. We hope that this synopsis will prove interesting and useful to those pursuing activities to help save our global environment. The report is also available for viewing on our website at <http://www.af-info.or.jp>.

I. Humanity in Crisis

Respondents were asked to indicate, with a time, their concern about humankind’s survival prospects in light of the further worsening of environmental problems.

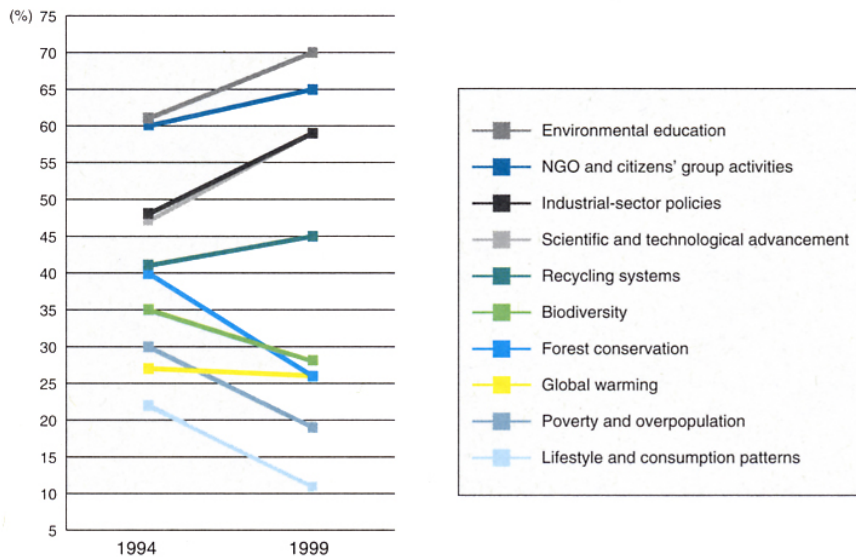


In 1992, when the questionnaire was first conducted, the average time response was 7:49. In each successive year, this time gradually advanced, until it registered within the range of extreme concern in 1996. Since then, and until 1999, the average response has remained in this time period, demonstrating that the sense of crisis is stronger than ever.

II. Agenda 21

A plan of action for the environment and development, known as Agenda 21, was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Of more than 20 items from Agenda 21 covered by our survey the in past eight years, we feature 10 here and show in the graph below the trend in survey responses from 1994 and 1999.

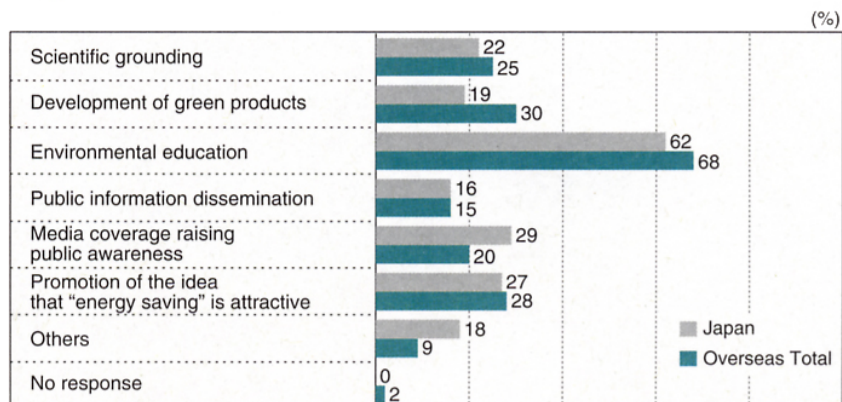
**Percent of Respondents Indicating Progress Attained in a Given Item
A Comparison of 1994 and 1999**



The four items “Environmental education,” “NGO and citizens’ group activities,” “Industrial-sector policies” and “Scientific and technological advancement” that received high ratings in the 1994 survey received even higher ratings in 1999. On the other hand, the three items “Lifestyles and consumption patterns,” “Poverty and overpopulation” and “Global warming” that received low ratings in 1994 also received even harsher ratings in 1999.

III. Lifestyle Alteration

As the above results indicate, we now understand that it will be extremely difficult to achieve the changes required in our “disposable, high-consumption” lifestyles to solve environmental problems. The following results were obtained regarding the most effective strategies to promote a change in the awareness of citizens about the need to change their lifestyles. (1999 Survey)



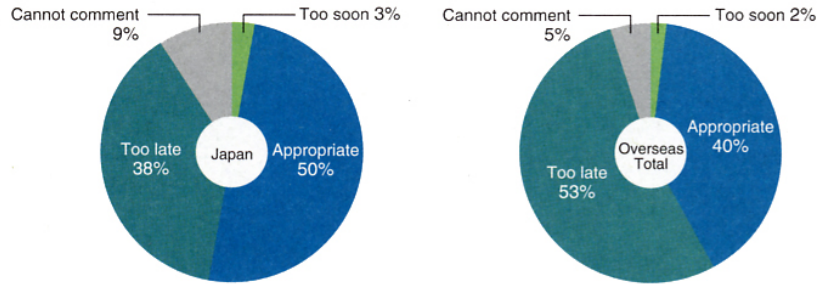
(Respondents were asked to select two, raising the total to 200%)

Among Japanese and overseas respondents alike, opinions supporting the notion that “Environmental education from kindergarten upward” would be the most effective strategy were noticeably prominent.

IV. Global Warming

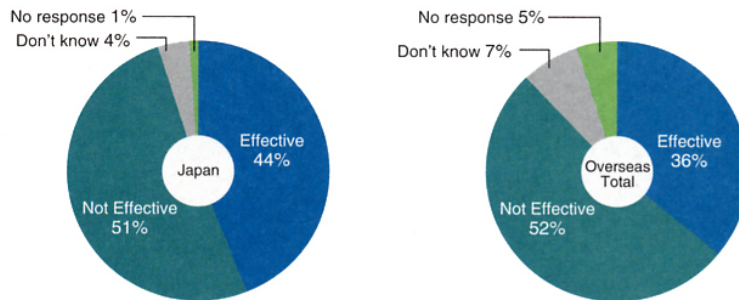
Following the Kyoto Conference in 1997, which was held to discuss worldwide measures to prevent global warming, the representatives of the treaty powers gathered for a conference the next year in Buenos Aires.

1. In the Kyoto Protocol, the developed countries agreed to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2% from 1990 levels. How do you feel about the decision to set the commitment period to between 2008 and 2012? (1998 Survey)



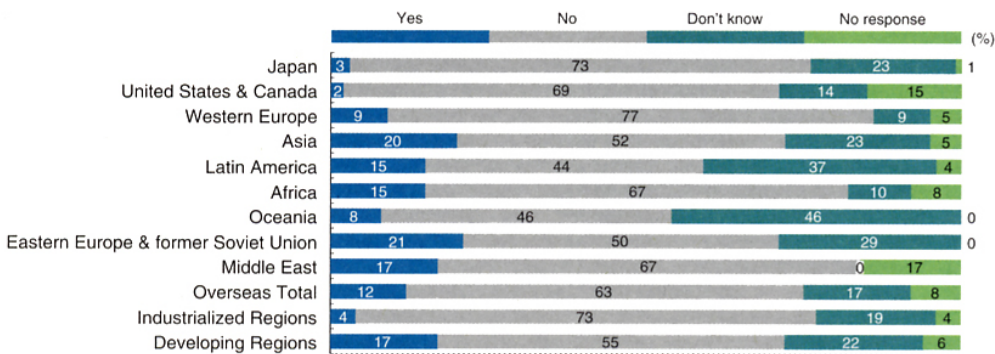
In the 1998 survey, 53% of overseas respondents thought this “too late,” while the percentage considering it “appropriate” topped 40%. In Japan, however, 50% thought it “appropriate,” surpassing the 38% who thought it “too late.”

2. Is “Emission Trading” an effective means of emission reduction? (1999 Survey)



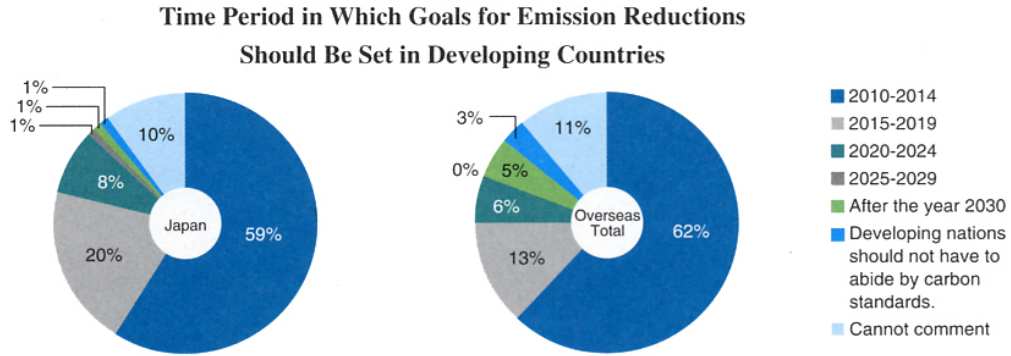
More than half of Japanese and overseas respondents alike said that “Emissions Trading” would be “not effective” as a means of reducing greenhouse gases. The reasons given for this response were “neglect of concerted domestic effort” and “it places higher priority on economic tactics than actual reductions.”

3. Do you think that the reduction targets for the 2008-2012 period can be achieved if global warming talks continue at the current pace? (1999 Survey)



Sixty-three percent of overseas respondents said “no.” Japanese respondents held even stricter views, with 73% opting for the “no” response.

4. With the total emissions of the developing countries expected to surpass those of the developed world in the first half of the 21st century, the participation of developing countries in controls aimed at reducing emissions is becoming an important topic. When do you think those goals for emissions reductions for developing countries should be initially set? (1998 Survey)

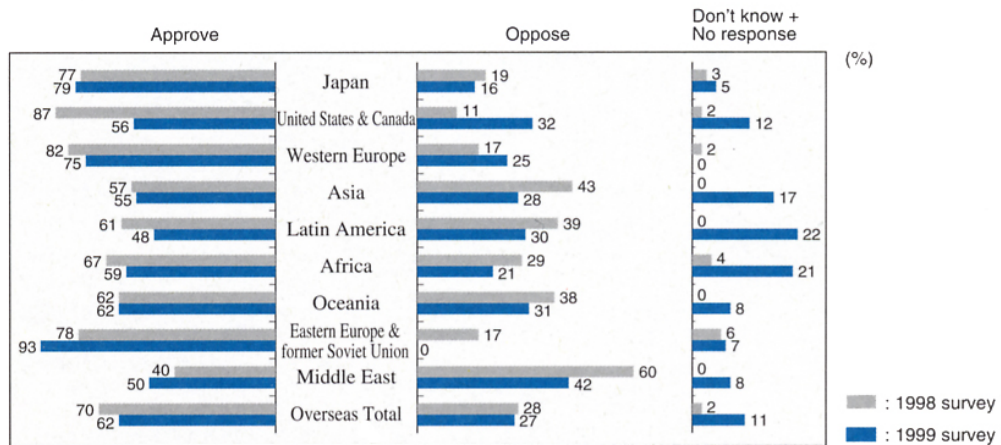


Approximately 60% of both Japanese and overseas respondents supported the idea that the commitment period for developing countries should be initially set from “2010 to 2014,” creating expectations for early implementation. This period is closest to the commitment period for developed nations.

V. Carbon Tax

Carbon taxes attempt to control fossil fuel consumption by taxing natural gas, gasoline and electric power generation from thermal plants, and other uses of fossil fuels. The graph below compares the results for 1998 and 1999 regarding the imposition of a carbon tax.

A Comparison of 1998 and 1999 Regarding Imposition of a Carbon Tax



An analysis of the total figure indicates that those in favor of imposing a tax were more numerous than those opposing it. Respondents in developed countries were more inclined to be in favor of the measure than their developing counterparts. A comparison of the two years, 1998 and 1999, also reveals little variance with the exception of the United States and Canada.

Please send the Foundation your comments or questions about this report by post, fax or E-mail

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