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ULTIMAS NOTICIAS DEL JAPON

(VIP 93)

(DISTRIBUCION EXCLUSIVA)

THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN

START A JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

From 1994 onward, the United States and Japan will start several joint programs referred to the "Fight against the Global Contamination", joining together financial and human resources from the two big powers. The first of these project is launched on a "Comprehensive Program of the Preservation of Bio-ecological Assets in the big Jawa Island, Indonesia", in which the two nations will try to preserve the existing flora and fauna developing deep bio-ecological studies and producing new useful medical resources of food from them in such a restricted way as to be inofensive from the point of view of preserving its original ecosystem, etc..

For this purpose an specific funding has been agreed upon between the two countries involved and a probable financing from the famous and already working "World's Bio-diversity Conservation Fund", both countries contributing with the same amount of resources.

To realize this project, they will assign, as a beginning, two of the country's natural reserve areas, and designate two major laboratories of the nation, one in the capital of Djakarta and the other in the city of Bogor; the collection of the basic data and biological samples, their classification and proper storage, the subsequent investigations will all be handled through these designated local partners.

But why Indonesia, among other nations? the country is so abundant in natural assets, to cite only a few of them there are 250.000 species of insects, 25.000 types of flowers, exuberant tropical rain forests, vast coral sea-beds.

The joint efforts of this kind were first accorded between President Bush and Primer Minister Miyazawa in January 1992, during the former official visit to Japan, and was reconfirmed by the new President Clinton and Mr. Miyazawa during his latest visit to the United States in April, this year.

(NOTE: Translation from ASAHI (Japanese newspaper), by Yukihiisa Eto, Ambassador of Japan in Chile).

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH AIR POLLUTION PROBLEMS

TURN TO CLEAN VEHICLES

A questionnaire carried out by the Environment Agency reveals that about half of 275 local governments located in air-pollution hot spots around the country have introduced electric-powered cars or other low-pollution vehicles and also that more than half of the local authorities that have not introduced such vehicles are considering doing so. These results show clearly the positive attitude of local governments toward environmental problems.

Implemented in December 1992, the questionnaire covered a total of 293 local governments - Japan's 47 Prefectures (including Tokyo and Osaka), 12 main cities, and the local governments of areas where air pollution caused by automobile exhaust has become a problem. Replies were received from 275 local governments.

The results of the questionnaire showed that 140 local governments, or 51 percent of the respondents, had introduced low-pollution vehicles for pollution patrols, refuse collection, public use, or other purposes. The number of clean vehicles introduced reached 266, or nearly

700 when the local governments that are scheduled to introduce such vehicles are included.

Electric cars accounted for about 80 percent and methanol cars for 16 percent of the low-pollution vehicles introduced so far. As for problems regarding the introduction of such low-pollution vehicles, the responding local governments pointed out especially the need for further technological improvements, more information, and subsidies from the Central Government.

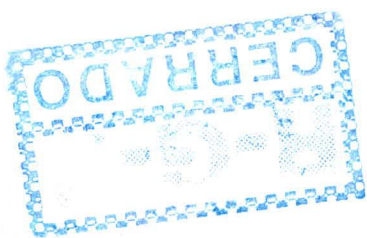
According to the Environment Agency, there are 1,300 electric cars, 210 methanol cars, 100 natural-gas cars, and 43 hybrid vehicles (powered by a combination of electricity and diesel engine) on the roads in Japan today. Such clean vehicles have several problems to overcome before they can be used more widely. For example, such cars are expensive (electric cars cost more than three times as much as gasoline cars), technologies are still at the development stage, and fueling facilities are few and far between. The Environment Agency plans to utilize the comments made by local governments in the questionnaire to help it formulate policies for the further proliferation of these low-pollution vehicles.

(The material herein is based on domestic Japanese news sources and is offered for reference purposes. It does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the Japanese Government or of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

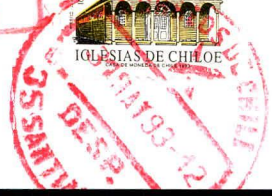
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