

FOREWORD

People depend on Earth's living systems for both life and livelihood. The benefits that human beings extract from nature are the foundation of all economies, the basis of major industries, sources of knowledge, and central to many cultures.

With explosive speed, the scale of human impact on ecosystems underwent a radical change in the past century. Human beings have changed the biological, physical, and chemical features of the planet at an unprecedented pace and scale, and these changes are continuing or accelerating today. While many of these changes, such as increased agricultural production, have greatly enhanced human well-being, many others — such as the loss of fisheries, degradation of water resources, and increased soil erosion — have not.

It is therefore imperative that we make wise choices in the management of these environmental goods and services. But whether it is a corporate CEO deciding on business strategies, a minister of planning weighing investments in natural resources, or a citizen activist pressing for more effective actions to alleviate poverty, decision-makers still lack understanding and foresight on environmental issues that could help them act responsibly on behalf of current and future generations.

For that reason, I welcome the publication of the Environmental Policy Priorities Index for Japan (JEPIX) which would have direct practical applications for Japanese companies who are keen on implementing environmental accounting systems. I congratulate the efforts of Prof. Nobuyuki Miyazaki, Prof. Claude Siegenthaler and his colleagues and sincerely hope that this publication would be useful not only to the private sector but also decision-makers and scholars alike.

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