

OPENING REMARKS

by

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Seminar on Development of Environmental and Emission Standards of VOCs
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Mr. Toyomu Nakano, the First Secretary of Embassy of Japan to Thailand, Mr. Yokio Kamesaka, Deputy Resident Representative JICA, Thailand, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to open the seminar on development of environmental and emission standards of VOCs . On Behalf of Pollution Control Department, I would like to welcome you to the opening session today.

First of all, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the Japan International Cooperation Agency for their kind support in this project. This project has been supported from JICA under the technical cooperation scheme in which JICA experts has been dispatched to work with my colleagues in PCD since March this year.

I believe that this seminar is an important event, an event that will help all levels of government, environmental groups, business, and others to come up with concrete plans to address the threats that the volatile organic compounds poses to the health and environment of Thailand.

One lesson we have learned in dealing with this problem in Thailand is that no single level of government and no organization can do it alone. We need to work in partnership to address our environmental challenges for the success of policy planning as well as its implementation.

When it comes to health and the environment, Thai people expect all levels of Government to act. Our citizens have the right to expect clean air and that there will

be adequate monitoring systems, adequate regulations and that the laws and regulations will be enforced.

VOCs emitted from the industry and vehicles are considered as one of the sources for suspended particulate matters (secondary formation), which exceed the standard and requires immediate countermeasure and also triggers photo-oxidant. Furthermore VOCs are hazardous air pollutions, which cause various acute health problem as well as carcinogenic risk. Under this situation, the Thai government considers VOCs as an important issue in ambient environmental matters. National Environmental board has instructed PCD to implement countermeasure for VOCs.

Map Ta Put incident in 1997 was a well know environmental problem related to VOCs. In this incident, tens of pupils in a school nearby the Map Ta Put industrial estate were hospitalized due to serious air pollution. Source of the pollution was considered as VOCs. The school was closed and moved to another location. Source pollutants and source factory has not been identified yet. Even now there are various reports and claims regarding occurrence of fruit like smell around the estate. According to complained record of Pollution Control Department, 40% of environmental complains are on odor and smell, and most of them are considered to be related to VOCs.

While gasoline, gasoline-fueled vehicles and small gas engines play a big part in the release of VOCs into the atmosphere, solvents are a significant contributor. Solvents are found in paints and coatings, glues and adhesives, and industrial and household cleaners. While the government will act on gasoline, gasoline fueled vehicles and engines and products, significant reductions will still be required from a wide range of existing solvent use sectors and industries. Among these are operations like commercial printing, auto repair and refinishing, industrial degreasing and scores of others. Here is where the emission source can move seriously to implement measures such as recovery techniques to capture VOCs which will significantly reduce emissions.

As there is no ambient environmental standard set for VOCs, a systematic monitoring of VOCs in ambient has not been implemented. PCD have implemented limited monitoring of VOCs. PCD started periodical monitoring at five stations around

Bangkok with special attention on mobile sources. Though, there is few data that systematically assures its quality. Concentrations of certain VOCs are estimated to be at levels at which health risk cannot be ignored. Therefore it is urgent matter for the government to confirm the necessity of the countermeasures.

As Director General of the Pollution Control Department, clean air is my priority. We are acting now to significantly reduce environmental problems caused by air pollution from all sources. And we have launched an integrated strategy to keep pressing forward.

I look forward to discussing ideas with all of our other partners at this seminar today, so that together we can provide the knowledge and create incentives that will help us - as governments, as companies, and as individuals - make choices that will help mitigate VOCs problem and ensure for appropriate management of this problem.

Thank you very much.