

OPENING REMARKS

by

Mr. Toyomu Nakano

1st Secretary of Embassy of Japan in Thailand

**Seminar on Development of Environmental and Emission Standards of VOCs
15 September 2006**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Toyomu NAKANO, First Secretary of the Japanese Embassy in Thailand. I deal with the whole range of environmental issues including air pollution and, of course VOC's. I am really pleased that so many people have joined this seminar on VOC's supported by JICA and the Japanese Government.

Though As Mr. X's introduction, I was an officer of the Environment Agency of Japan 10 years ago, which is called Ministry of the Environment. At that time I actually dealt with VOC's, especially in monitoring their effect on the environment. I have had no opportunity to deal with VOC's since then, but I am very happy to do so now as a secretary of the Japanese Embassy in Thailand. Anyway, please don't assume that I am a specialist on VOC's now. It is 10 years ago and unfortunately I have already forgotten a lot of what I knew.

Well, please allow me to say a few words on behalf of the Embassy of Japan. As you know, VOC's are quite dangerous in the working field because of their high concentration. But they are in extremely low concentration in environmental air. Therefore, it was quite difficult to estimate the health risks. So far, we are now able to evaluate how dangerous some VOC's are, but I don't think it is sufficient to protect our health against all kinds of VOC's. We are going to research the effects on people of other VOC's in low concentration. However our modern society is based on natural and artificial chemicals, and we must share the air with VOC's and other hazardous air pollutants. I think that what we must try to do is to control their use.

Honestly speaking, I don't think that setting emission standards is the only one method against VOC's. We can combine other policies to decrease the concentration of VOC's. A typical one is Benzene. In Japan, most Benzene in air was from automobiles because gasoline contained a lot of benzene. So far benzene has been removed from gasoline in industrial plants, because it is hazardous for people, and it is worth for other industrial fields. In the case of gasoline, we Japan didn't establish an emission standard for benzene from automobiles. But its concentration in the air still decreased.

Right now, Thailand is starting full activities relating to VOC's, partly supported by technical cooperation from JICA. I hope that you in Thailand establish the best policy regarding VOC's, even better than the Japanese one. From now, You will take part in the latter stage of the program, and I hope the JICA expert with the benefit of their experience in this field will be helpful to you in this seminar.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and to Director-General Dr. Mornthip and her staff for offering their support and cooperation toward this seminar. Thank you very much.