

Joint recommendation on biofuels for transportation considering sustainability

Provisional Translation

Climate change is one of the most serious threats not only to human beings but also to whole ecosystems, and it is needed that we prevent the problem in every possible means. At the same time, we, undersigned NGOs and NPOs, which are tackling global environmental issues, believe that any measures to prevent climate change should be considered “sustainability” from all aspects, not just be focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Regarding measures in transportation sector, it is essential to reduce energy demand fundamentally by establishing sustainable transportation system.

Currently, Japanese government plans to promote the use of biofuel for achieving emission target determined in Kyoto Protocol. It is an important policy in terms of shifting energy use from fossil energy to renewable energy. However, current plan is implicitly expecting that most biofuel would be imported from abroad. We concern that rapid demand increase for biofuel from agricultural products such as palm oil and sugarcane could cause negative impacts on environment and society, such as inappropriate development of plantation and competition with food demand.

The effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions should not cause more environmental destruction and social problems in producer countries. We here recommend businesses, government agencies, and end consumers, who are involving with production, processing, import, and consumption of biofuel, to adopt the following procurement policies and principles:

0. Fundamental actions should be taken for reducing energy demand on transportation.
 1. Priority should be put on local or domestic biomass resources and biomass resources which do not compete with food demand.
 2. Source of raw material supply should be identified and traceability system can be confirmed through supply chain.
 3. Total effect of greenhouse gasses reduction should be ensured through all lifecycle of the biofuel production, processing, distribution and consumption,.
 4. Following conditions should be met in production of raw materials
 - 4.1. Compliance: International and domestic laws, rules and standards on human rights of local people and workers, conditions of work, and impacts on environment in production and processing should be complied with.
 - 4.2. Environmental and social impact assessment: Environmental and social impact assessment should be implemented appropriately and in a transparent manner, and the results should be publicly opened.
 - 4.3 Conservation of ecosystem: Natural forests and other natural habitats, especially, high conservation value ecosystem, should not be degraded.
 - 4.4. Social consent: Rights of local communities should be respected, and there should be free and prior informed consent among those communities with sufficient information. There should not be any conflicts with interested stakeholders.
 - 4.5. Environmental management: Management of waste water and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions such as methane, restriction of high risk pesticide, reduction and integrative management of pesticide use should be conducted. In producing and manufacturing processes, genetically modified organisms should not be released to environment.

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