

## **Japan Water Forum (JWF) Prospectus**

Water is the source of all life. Water is an integral part of all kinds of human activities, and now, the recognition of water as a basic human right is spreading across the globe.

However, the population explosion and dramatic expansion of human activities has been destroying nature ever since the industrial revolution and our activities have significantly impacted the water cycle. As a result, water related problems are becoming more prominent and increasingly important in the world today.

1.1 billion people around the world lack access to safe drinking water, and 2.4 billion live in a poor environment without basic sanitation facilities. Water conservation measures to prevent water shortage and water contamination are being sought from the environmental perspective, and meanwhile, there is growing concern about securing food supply for the rapidly expanding world population. There is a growing awareness that a multilateral and comprehensive approach across various sectors and stakeholders is the key to improving water related problems and consequently making human activities more sustainable.

This is the environment in which Japan hosted the 3rd World Water Forum for eight days from March 16 to 23, 2003. The Forum gathered over 24,000 participants from 183 countries and regions in the Lake Biwa and the Yodo River Basin. It centered on concrete actions regarding the resolution of global water problems, and pushed the world forward to realize new actions with full stakeholder involvement.

As the host country, one of the realizations that Japan came to during the Water Forum was that Japan experienced many of the same challenges that developing countries are facing today 40 to 50 years ago. However, Japan has not adequately shared the lessons learnt or failures experienced through its efforts in tackling those problems with the rest of the world, and similar problems are still being repeated in other areas of the world today. It was also reaffirmed that sharing common fundamental principals regarding water is essential to ensure that "water", the fountain of life, will be passed on to future generations.

How should we humans live with water? What Japan needs to do is to gather its experiences and knowledge, establish basic principles, and share them with others to make a contribution toward improving domestic and international water problems. In order to achieve these, we propose to establish the Japan Water Forum.

**May 2004**