

Remarks on Acceptance of the Blue Planet Prize 2007 by Amory B. Lovins

Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

This precious award honors decades of collaboration with my colleagues at Rocky Mountain Institute and around the world, including Japan. Special meaning comes from this Prize's roots in Japan—the world leader in eliminating waste (*muda*), in beautifully simple design that harmoniously integrates people within nature, and in social ability to form and quickly adopt a new consensus. These attributes can uniquely equip Japan—if the Japanese people choose to accept this mission—to lead the world on the historic shift to benign, secure, and affordable energy, for all, for ever.

This leadership will challenge the Japanese people to make four changes:

1. Japan's extraordinary gains in energy efficiency after the 1970s oil shocks have faded into complacency. Japan, once the pioneer of energy efficiency, now has passenger vehicles scarcely more efficient, and buildings less efficient, than in America. The average person uses more electricity in Japan than in California or New York, and that use is growing as fast as in Texas. Some Japanese firms do keep getting more efficient, but few Japanese people pay much attention. Too many think climate protection means cost, burden, and sacrifice—not profit, competitive advantage, and higher quality of life. Today's techniques can profitably at least *triple* Japanese energy efficiency, enhance security, and help protect our blue planet—if Japanese people realize this is possible and insist that it happen.
2. Japan is poor in *fuels*, but is the richest of all major industrial countries in renewable *energy* that can meet the entire long-term energy needs of an energy-efficient Japan, at lower cost and risk than current plans. Japanese industry can do it faster than anyone—if Japanese policymakers acknowledge and allow it.
3. The old idea that a big industrial economy requires giant, vulnerable power plants is now obsolete. The revolutions in miniaturization and information make millions of smart distributed electric generators cheaper, faster to build, and more reliable than a few big plants—if old institutions and habits stop favoring central plants.
4. Today's fast-moving energy technologies and markets make old bureaucratic and monopolistic habits no longer in the national interest. Japanese energy policy needs to become more diverse, agile, and open. Japan's technological and commercial genius will best flower *if* all ways to save or produce energy can compete fairly, at honest prices—no matter which kind they are, what technology they use, where they are, how big they are, or who owns them.

Japan's energy future and the world's depend on these four big *ifs*. Each is a big challenge — and a huge opportunity. So let me end with a fifth *if*:

If the nation with the sacred sun on its flag now turns these potentials into reality, and by its example, leadership, and investment quickly shares them with its neighbors, then Japan's highest purpose in history will be achieved; your country will have led the whole world to be healthier, safer, richer, fairer, and cooler; and all beings everywhere will be as happy and grateful as I am today.