

## 1) RUSSIA SET TO RATIFY KYOTO PROTOCOL

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Russia has moved a step closer to ratifying the 1997 Kyoto Protocol following the conclusion by an ad hoc government team investigating the possible effects of the pact on the country that the agreement would be free from economic and political risks, The Yomiuri Shimbun learned Monday.

Russian government sources said the team of officials, which is coordinating Moscow's stance toward the pact by listening to the input from all relevant ministries and agencies, has conveyed its conclusion to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Russian leader is now expected to ask the Russian parliament as early as September to begin deliberations on the climate change accord with a view to ratifying it, the sources said. The pact, formally called the Kyoto Protocol to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, was adopted by an international conference in Kyoto in 1997.

However, the United States, the country that emits the largest amount of carbon dioxide, withdrew from the treaty in 2001. Despite the absence of the United States, the Russian conclusion favoring ratification is certain to give new momentum to enable the pact, which Japan ratified in June last year, to enter into force.

The team's findings consists of two main conclusions. The first, referring to the 12-year period of First Joint Fulfillment of agreements from 2008, says it will be possible for Russia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to below 1990 levels without encountering particular burdens.

The conclusion is based on projections compiled by the Russian Energy Ministry and the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring.

The second, prepared by the Russian Foreign Ministry, says that even if Russia ratifies the 1997 protocol, it would remain obliged to comply with the greenhouse gas emissions accord only during the first Joint Fulfillment period--12 years--from 2008. Further joint international action to combat global warming would require another round of ratification, a statement favoring the ratification of the pact, according to the sources.

Two conditions must be met for the Kyoto Protocol to enter into force.

First, at least 55 countries must ratify it, and second, their combined volume of greenhouse gases must account for 55 percent of such emissions from industrialized countries.

The withdrawal of the United States-- which emits about 36.1 percent of greenhouse gases throughout the world--means that the pact could not have entered into force without ratification by Russia, which has a global share of 17.4 percent of emissions.