

The Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC) submitted the following recommendations to the Minister of the Environment, Japan in preparation for COP24:

Recommendations for Further Development of Climate Change Policies toward a Sustainable Future

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The 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 24) is a critical milestone for global climate change policy development and implementation. It is expected to finalize the negotiation of the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement and to conduct a facilitative dialogue (Talanoa Dialogue) to take stock of the collective efforts toward future.

All of the Party countries are currently fully involved in preparing for implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and developing their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). At the same time, the international community has been accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Next year, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will review selected SDGs including goal 13 on climate action.

The IPCC Special Report on Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C, which was published in last October, urged the international community to take action to address climate change, and develop linkages with the SDGs, based on an analysis of how the climate will be affected by an increase of 1.5°C in the global average temperature.

In 2019 the Government of Japan (GOJ) is expected to play a leading role in advancing international debates on action to address climate change, as the holder of the G20 Presidency and host of the Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Energy in June.

With this background, the Overseas Environmental Cooperation

Center, Japan (OECC), which is expected to play a central role in implementing international cooperation for sustainable development, submits its recommendations for Japan's leadership in developing climate change policies and advancing global debates.

1. Long-term Strategy on Climate Change

The Paris Agreement stipulates a long-term target of limiting the increase of the global average temperature to less than 2°C (and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C). The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5, 2013) emphasized the urgent action needed to realize a 40% – 70% reduction in net global emissions by 2050 from the baseline of 2010, and to achieve zero net emissions by 2100. This is to be achieved by tripling or quadrupling the share of energy from renewable sources and deployment of highly efficient equipment by 2050.

While it seems to be impossible to avoid an increase in the net CO₂ emissions of developing countries, Article 4 of the Paris Agreement encourages the Party countries to formulate their long-term low carbon development strategies with a view to global CO₂ net emissions peaking as early as possible.

Japan is required to present its positive position to the international community on the long-term perspective of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as a global leader on climate change and the holder of the G20 Presidency in 2019. Recently expectations from the international community towards the leadership of the GOJ have been growing significantly.

By formulating its long-term strategy on climate change, Japan will not only be able to advance its current climate change measures, but also show its clear vision for a sustainable future.

OECC is ready to contribute to effective implementation of the long-term strategy, applying its rich experience and professional expertise accumulated through activities for international cooperation for sustainable development.

2. Co-innovation Approach for Future International Cooperation

Recently the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) announced the Vision for International Cooperation on Climate Change Mitigation (March 2018) to further develop climate mitigation actions with a co-innovation approach. To achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement, it is necessary to transform economic and social systems in developing and emerging economies/countries, towards the vision of a decarbonized society. This requires building a new system of cooperation with a co-innovation approach that adopts interactive cooperation between developed and developing countries, rather than the conventional model of one-way cooperation from developed countries to developing countries. Japan has taken the lead in adopting this approach and has already implemented some projects employing it, and therefore, Japan is expected to continue implementing such cooperation and share good practices with other countries.

In addition, the GOJ launched the Partnership to Strengthen Transparency for co-Innovation (PaSTI) during COP23 in Bonn last December. Through this framework, Japan is building a new system for promoting transparency in private sector implementation of climate measures, in particular in developing countries. In this regard, the MOEJ recently announced a new policy framework on Expansion of Environmental Infrastructure (July 2017), which encourages both public and private sectors to extend high-quality environmental infrastructure to their partners, with the aim of contributing to environmental improvement and developing climate change measures through a co-innovation approach.

OECC has been committed to supporting development of climate change policies, including NDCs, in developing countries through the Joint Credit Mechanism (JCM) from its initial phase. From this experience it has disseminated best practice on implementing JCM projects to other developing countries. OECC would also like to further develop cooperation with developing countries that have committed to implementing policies and measures toward realizing a decarbonized society, and is able to share best practice from its experiences in assisting the countries of ASEAN, such as Viet Nam.

3. Climate Adaptation Actions

Recent climatic disasters have reminded us of the need to take urgent actions on climate adaptation. In Japan, the Climate Change Adaptation Law was enacted early this year, and the GOJ made its Cabinet Decision on the National Plan for Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change, which enables integrated implementation by fully involving a broad range of stakeholders.

Under the framework of the Law, the GOJ has started creating a national network, the Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (A-Plat) to implement climate adaptation measures by mobilizing the capacity of local governments and private sector organizations, under the leadership of the MOEJ and the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES).

While developing countries have been accelerating their formulation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), they lack sufficient capacity for disaster prevention and are not well equipped with scientific knowledge on climate risks. Most developing countries in Asia and the Pacific are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, and in the long run this may also have effects on Japan's economy and society. In order to support these countries in addressing climate adaptation, the GOJ is committed to launching the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (AP-Plat) in the near future.

OECC has already worked with the Government of Thailand on developing its national adaptation platform, which is called T-Plat, as a pilot case for other countries in the region. OECC would like to contribute to establishing the AP-Plat by making full use of the experience and expertise in formulating and implementing their NAPs.

In addition, it is important to bring feedback from these experiences on the ground level into international debates on climate change adaptation. OECC plans to disseminate the outcomes of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee (AC) expert meeting on national adaptation goals/indicators and their relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction to the international community through its side event during COP24, together with the UNFCCC AC and the MOEJ. OECC would like the GOJ to continue to take the lead in developing international debates on addressing climate adaptation at the global level.

Conclusion

These recommendations focus on the actions that are needed in the context of the upcoming COP24. However, we believe that in the year ahead Japan will face a very critical period for the future direction of climate change policy development and implementation, and therefore, we would like the GOJ to take an active role not only in international negotiations during COP24, but also in accelerating global debates on advancing climate actions to address this urgent global agenda.