

Japan should join calls for a “Green Recovery” and tackle climate crisis

The Japan Climate Initiative (hereinafter referred to as “JCI”) is a coalition of non-state actors established in July 2018 by Japanese companies, local governments and NGOs that pledge to stand at the forefront of global challenges in order to realize the decarbonized society envisioned by the Paris Agreement.

JCI comprises of nearly 500 diverse non-state actors that are playing active role in addressing climate change, such as large companies leading the Japanese economy, small and medium-sized enterprises supporting the local communities, local governments, religious groups, consumer groups, universities, think tanks, environmental NPOs/NGOs, etc. The total amount of greenhouse gas emissions and population of JCI members accounts for more than one-third of Japan’s total.

As collective voices of Japanese non-state actors, in February this year, JCI submitted a message calling for the enhancement of Japan’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), and in May, another message calling for “Green Recovery” that contributes to the transition towards a decarbonized society to the Japanese government in order to encourage dialogues between Japanese non-state actors and the national government. Upon the “Online Platform Ministerial Meeting”, we would like to deliver the voices of Japanese non-state actors to the world.

The spread of the COVID-19 infection has already taken lives of many people and has seriously affected the economy, corporate management, employment, and even social life both in Japan and in the world. It goes without saying that the most important issue right now is to take all possible measures to stop the spread of infection as soon as possible. While prioritizing these urgent efforts to address the coronavirus crisis, what we must not forget is to continue and strengthen efforts to overcome another crisis facing humanity, the climate crisis.

The stagnation of economic activity caused by the spread of infection is predicted to curb recent energy consumption and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. However, what is needed to overcome the climate crisis is not a short-term emission reduction due to reduced economic activity, but a continuous and substantial reduction in emissions that is compatible with economic growth a transformation into a decarbonized social and economic system.

If the efforts to tackle the climate crisis are delayed, natural disasters that threaten human lives such as typhoons, heat waves, droughts and floods will become uncontrollable. In addition, climate change is predicted to lead to the spread of pre-existing infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, which could again cause the immense impact that the world is experiencing due to the COVID-19 right now.

Various international organizations, many countries, and various groups of companies have proposed "Green Recovery" and "Sustainable Recovery" that make investment for economic recovery contribute to climate change countermeasures. In addition to the European Union's green recovery plan, which is a representative example of the movement, "We Are Still In", a network of non-state actors in the United States, issued a statement calling on the U.S. Congress for support to Build Back Better. The voice of non-state actors calling for "Green Recovery" has been growing internationally.

Also in Japan, it is necessary to make recovery from the COVID-19 crisis consistent with efforts toward the transition to a decarbonized society. Many companies and local governments participating in JCI have taken the lead in efforts such as the expansion of renewable energy represented by RE100 and declaration of carbon neutrality.

Recently, a series of proposals to raise the national renewable energy target for 2030 to more than 40 to 45%, which is about twice the current national target, have been announced by several groups of Japanese companies or local governments.

Prior to COP26 held in November 2021, the Japanese government will consider revisions of the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures and the Strategic Energy Plan. JCI will proceed with discussions and hold dialogues with the Japanese government so that these amendments will become proactive toward the realization of a decarbonized society in terms of the phase-out of all coal-fired power plants and the significant expansion of renewable energy etc.

Again, JCI calls on the Japanese government to enhance its NDC including the revision of its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, and to make the recovery from the coronavirus crisis "Green Recovery" that supports the climate efforts of non-state actors and contributes to the transition towards a decarbonized society, rather than fixing its dependence on fossil fuels.

JCI will actively participate in "Race to Zero", which is a global campaign that non-state actors in the world join together with the aim of achieving net-zero as soon as possible, to accelerate Japan's efforts toward decarbonization and contribute to the earlier realization of a decarbonized society.

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The Steering Committee of Japan Climate Initiative

The Steering Committee of Japan Climate Initiative: CDP Japan, ICLEI Japan, Japan Climate Leaders' Partnership (Japan-CLP), Network of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Business and Energy Future, The Frontier Network (TFN), Renewable Energy Institute, WWF Japan