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[Press Release] Time to raise the 2030 target to at least 50% reductions – Welcoming the announcement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050(2020/10/26)

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[Press Release]

Time to raise the 2030 target to at least 50% reductions
Welcoming the announcement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

October 26, 2020
Kiko Network
Mie Asaoka, President

Today, in his first policy speech at the 203rd Extraordinary Diet Session, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga pledged that Japan will aim to reduce total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to zero in 2050 – that is, to realize a carbon-neutral, decarbonized society by 2050.

By the time of the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) in December of last year, more than 120 countries had already announced that they had already set or were progressing in their review of a 2050 CO2 net zero target. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050 is an essential benchmark in achieving the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C. With this policy statement, Japan will be able to belatedly join the other countries of the world and set reduction targets based on the latest science necessary to face the climate crisis.

Mie Asaoka, President of Kiko Network said,“We welcome this announcement that Japan is setting the same goal as the rest of the world, and the clear declaration of the direction and timeline for a decarbonized society that Japan should adopt. We also welcome his commitments on fostering a green industry, accelerating the change in the way of thinking about transforming the industrial structure, and fundamentally changing policy on coal-fired power.”

On the other hand, it is not possible to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C just by setting a

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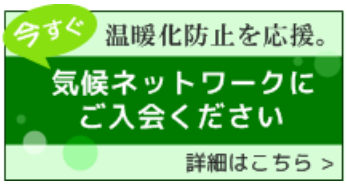

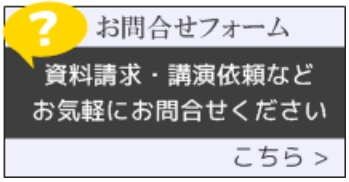

2050 net zero target. Based on the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it is clear that cumulative CO2 emissions are proportional to rising global temperatures. If current emission trends continue, the global temperature may exceed 1.5°C by 2030 due to the CO2 emissions already released into the atmosphere, and to prevent this it is necessary to reduce CO2 emissions by nearly half (45%) by 2030.

Kimiko Hirata, International Director of Kiko Network said, “in order to achieve the 1.5°C target, it is crucial to ensure not only net zero by 2050, but also a pathway for significant reductions by 2030, and coal has to be phased out by 2030”.

In response to Prime Minister Suda’s statement, based on the above the following is necessary:

・Articulating the 2050 net zero target in legislation

The 2050 net zero target should be reflected in Japan’s “Long-term Strategy under the Paris Agreement” decided in June 2019, and the 2050 net zero target should be made into law.

・Raising the 2030 target to at least a 50% reduction in GHG emissions (compared to 1990), and formulating an energy mix without nuclear and coal-fired power

Raise the 2030 target to be consistent with the 2050 target and the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C goal. Furthermore, commit to phasing out coal-fired power by 2030, with a plan to simultaneously phase out nuclear power, and revise the electricity mix in 2030 with only renewable energy and LNG.

・Investment directed toward measures and social policies that can be undertaken immediately, rather than innovative technologies

Prime Minister Suga announced a policy to promote innovative technologies such as next-generation solar cells and carbon recycling. However, the “Environment Innovation Strategy” established in January 2020 includes many technologies aiming to be realized after 2030 (CCS / CCUS, etc.) that have no prospect of practical application, and also includes inappropriate nuclear technology. Many of these technologies can hardly contribute to reducing GHG emissions by 2030 and cannot address the urgency needed for our climate. In order to halve emissions by 2030 to contribute to the 1.5°C target, a transformation of the industrial structure is inevitable, and drastically reviewing current investment policies is necessary.

Investment should be strengthened in the institutional and technical measures for renewable energy and energy efficiency that can be promoted immediately, and in support for the transition of employment (just transition) in order to advance the shift from energy-intensive industries to clean industries. It is important to support employers in energy-intensive industries, including power and steel sectors, in providing better jobs through the acceleration of decarbonization.

・Strengthening carbon pricing to accelerate the transition to a decarbonized society

A policy approach that accelerates the full transformation of social and economic systems toward the goal of a decarbonized society is inevitable. Full-scale discussions on the introduction of carbon pricing should be promoted in order to accelerate the actions of all actors to shift carbon-intensive businesses and products toward decarbonization.

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tag： Domestic Policy, Emission Reduction Target, Renewable Energy, パリ協定

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