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[Press Release] Japan's Long-term Strategy under the Paris Agreement: Time to start process to update to more ambitious NDC to secure a pathway to 1.5 degree goal b(June 11, 2019)

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Press Release

Japan's Long-term Strategy under the Paris Agreement:
Time to start process to update to more ambitious NDC to secure a pathway to 1.5 degree goal

June 11, 2019, Kiko Network

On June 11, 2019, Japan's "Long-term Strategy under the Paris Agreement" was approved by the Cabinet under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The Strategy was unimproved from its draft of April 24, and repeatedly emphasizes innovation, as if the problem can be solved by problematic technologies such as carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS), space solar power, and innovative nuclear reactors. Despite proclaiming "decarbonized society" as the ultimate goal, the Strategy underestimates the potential for practical and effective measures to utilize renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. Mie Asaoka, Kiko Network President said, "Technologies such as CCUS have no clear prospects for practical use, but the Strategy highlights them to justify the continued use of fossil fuels and nuclear power. It is an exercise in procrastination that will leave behind a huge burden for future generations. It is clearly inconsistent with the Paris Agreement." Prime Minister Abe said that Japan will take the lead in a global paradigm shift in environmental policies by firmly establishing a virtuous circle of environment and growth, but the Strategy can be interpreted as a sign that Japan will not move seriously toward a sustainable energy future, and such a perception could result in significant damage to Japan and Japanese business in the international community.

Based on its stated goals of keeping the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels and shifting to a decarbonized society, the Strategy should have stipulated the termination of ongoing construction of many coal-fired power plants domestically and internationally, and the phase-out of existing coal plants in Japan. Kimiko Hirata, International Director said, "Japan needs to phase out domestic coal plants by 2030 at the latest, and set a pathway to ensure a just transition to a nuclear-free and 100% renewable energy future."

The report states that the Strategy will be revisited flexibly about every six years to reflect changes in the situation. However, the IPCC Special Report on "Global Warming of 1.5℃" points out that measures to be taken over the next 10 years are extremely important. In that context, it is unacceptable for Japan to leave this Strategy unchanged for six years, as it would miss crucial opportunities to strengthen actions by 2030, and to consider raising the level of ambition in the Global Stocktake in 2023. To be consistent with the 1.5℃ goal, Japan should promptly launch a process to revise its targets (currently -26% by 2030 and -80% by 2050). The target should be more ambitious, at -45% to -50% by 2030, and carbon neutral by 2050.

Reference

Government of Japan, Long-term Strategy under the Paris Agreement, June 2019
URL: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/The%20Long-term%20Strategy%20under%20the%20Paris%20Agreement.pdf

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