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The 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25) - Summary

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The 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25) – Summary



From December 2nd to 15th, in Madrid, Spain, the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25), the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and the 2nd session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA2), as well as the 51st session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI51) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA51), were held respectively, as summarized in the following outline.

The Government of Japan was represented by Mr. Koizumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, accompanied by officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, who participated in the conferences.

The Government of Japan contributed to the negotiations for Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (market mechanisms) and other agenda, with Minister Koizumi

leading the discussions through intensive participations in bilateral and ministerial consultations, in addition to technical negotiations attended by Heads of Delegation and expert-level officials.

Furthermore, during the conferences, Japan proactively delivered its achievements and efforts, including the record of five-year-consecutive reductions in GHG emissions as well as active commitments by non-state actors.

1. Summary of the negotiations

(1) Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (market mechanisms)

The negotiations for implementation guidelines for market mechanisms, whose agreement had not been reached at COP24, became one of the highlights at COP25. The Government of Japan called for the avoidance of double-counting of emission reductions and securing environmental integrity. Minister Koizumi held intensive bilateral consultations with other Ministers and took the lead in the ministerial negotiations with constructive proposals, added by technical negotiations attended by Heads of Delegations and expert-level officials. On the other hand, under this agenda item, due to political aspects with complicated interest of each country, it was not possible to reach agreement on all discussion items. On the basis of the progress attained through discussions at COP25, the Government of Japan on its part will continue to contribute towards the adoption of the implementation guidelines for market mechanisms at COP26, to be held in November, 2020 in the United Kingdom.

(2) Loss and Damage (loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change)

The review was held for the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts. As some countries claimed to request the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to provide support, it was decided that within the existing frameworks considerations will continue. It was also agreed to establish the expert group to support activities and the Santiago Network to catalyze technical assistance.

(3) Other discussions

Discussions were held on a broad range of negotiation agendas

including the periodic review of the long-term global goal under the Convention, climate finance, reporting formats under the transparency frameworks (reporting systems for Parties to the Paris Agreement), gender and climate change, impacts of implementation of response measures (social and economic impacts arising from the implementation of mitigation policies and actions), adaptation, development and transfer of technologies, capacity building, agriculture, research and systematic observation.

(4) Bilateral meetings with other Ministerial-level delegates

Minister Koizumi held a total of 36 bilateral meetings with Ministers/Representatives of 13 countries/regions and with heads of four organizations, including Chile (COP25 Presidency), Costa Rica, Brazil, European Union, France, Germany, South Africa, Singapore, New Zealand, and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres as well as UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa. Throughout the meetings,



Minister Koizumi discussed with Chile's Environment Minister, Ms. Carolina Schmidt (middle), and Spain's Environment Minister, Ms. Teresa Ribera (left)
(Photo by IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth)



Minister Koizumi discussed with Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of UNFCCC, Ms. Patricia Espinosa
(Photo by IISD/ENB | Kiara Worth)



Statement by Mr. Koizumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, at the Ministerial Meeting

Minister Koizumi took the lead in negotiations for implementation guidelines for market mechanism and exchanged views on various points including vision and actions regarding climate change.

2. Promotion of Action by Japan

(1) High-level segments

(a) Statement by Minister Koizumi at the Ministerial Meeting

Minister Koizumi first and foremost made clear Japan's firm position on negotiations for market mechanisms under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, instruments for accelerating global emissions reductions, that the implementation guidelines shall be adopted to avoid double counting and secure environmental integrity.

Furthermore, Minister Koizumi promoted Japan's efforts and ideas for climate change effectively as

follows:

- while Japan was not yet able to share a new development on our coal-related policy by COP25, we are taking appropriate note of criticisms and continuing to take concrete actions toward decarbonization and delivering the results;
- trying to change the current perception where Japan's actions are being overshadowed by criticism to its coal policy and are not well received; Japan is fully committed to decarbonization and Japan will realize it;
- since taking office as Minister of the Environment in September 2019, increased the number of local governments with the net-zero declaration by 2050 from 4 to 28, equivalent to the population of 45 million – such ambitious actions by local governments expected to create a great force in

accelerating the nation-wide net zero achievement by Japan;

- emphasizing that the number of companies and institutions supporting TCFD recommendations in Japan is the largest in the world, which is attracting more investment with proper disclosure of climate related information;
- supporting the Green Climate Fund as a leading donor.

(b) Ministerial Dialogue on Adaptation

The Government of Chile convened the "Ministerial Dialogue on Adaptation Ambition" to discuss raising ambitions and share examples of efforts by respective countries. H.E. Ms Carolina Schmidt, Minister of the Environment, Chile, and H.E. Teresa Ribera, Minister for the Ecological Transition, Spain chaired

the dialogue. Prime Ministers/Ministers of four countries including Minister Koizumi, delivered remarks and held panel discussions.

Minister Koizumi explained the Climate Change Adaptation Act, which came into force in December 2019 in Japan, and the establishment of “Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform” to support the Asia Pacific region in science-based adaptation actions.

(c) GCA (Global Climate Action) Plenary Event

A GCA event was convened to share actions and achievement against climate change undertaken by Contracting Parties and non-state actors. From Japan, Mr. Morishita Satoru, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, explained actions taken by local governments and private companies in Japan and highlighted that Japan timely included decarbonization in its long-term strategy under the Paris Agreement.

Official side events and others

(a) Carbon Neutrality Coalition Ministerial Event at COP25

Under the chair of Ms. Laurence Tubiana, former Ambassador in charge of the negotiations on climate change of France, the meeting was also attended by H.E. Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, H.E. Mr. James Shaw, Minister for Climate Change of New Zealand, H.E. Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica and H.E. Mr. Myung Rae Cho, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea. Minister Koizumi stated that Japan is the first G7 member to declare carbon neutrality in the long-term strategy under the Paris Agreement, non-state actors such as local governments and private sectors are accelerating actions and the

Circular Economy Business Forum to be held in Tokyo plans to have a session for the Carbon Neutrality Coalition. In response, the Republic of Korea, which on this occasion announced its intent of participation in the Coalition, expressed its appreciation for the support extended by Minister Koizumi for its participation in the Coalition.

(b) Workshop at the United Nations SDG Pavilion

The workshop was held to discuss collaboration of efforts toward climate change measures and the achievement of SDGs. Minister Koizumi announced that: Japan will, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF), convene the Circular Economy Business Forum around in May 2020; coordinated actions based on the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” agreed at G20 Summit of 2019 are necessary; Japan will host an international conference on climate change and disaster prevention in collaboration with the UN organizations; and Japan offered to host the third Climate and SDGs Synergy Conference in 2021.

(2) Side events at the Japan Pavilion

The Japan Pavilion at COP25 venue featured various exhibitions and seminars. Under the theme of “ACTION. ACTION. ACTION.” Japan showcased its strength centering on hydrogen technologies, space/ocean observation, measures against fluorocarbons, and wind power generation technologies, and covering both aspects of mitigation and adaptation, exhibited models/dioramas/panels with their images. Furthermore, at the side-events, Japan delivered its various efforts to contribute to the global decarbonization with concrete actions. The following is the summary of major events:

(a) Initiative on Life Cycle Management of Fluorocarbons

Minister Koizumi declared to launch the Initiative on Life Cycle Management of Fluorocarbons, on the occasion of the establishment ceremony for the initiative convened by the Government of Japan. France, Chile, Maldives, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) voiced support for the initiative. (As of now, 11 countries and international organizations as well as 10 companies and bodies in Japan have expressed support.)

(b) Osaka Blue Ocean Vision

The roundtable for the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision was held. Minister Koizumi shared the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision with Ministers and senior officials of countries including 8 countries other than members of G20. Participating countries expressed their determination for measures against marine plastic litter.

(c) Climate Change and Disaster Prevention

Japan hosted an event for climate change and disaster prevention, at which Minister Koizumi appealed Japan’s efforts based on the Climate Change Adaptation Act, support for the promotion of highly effective adaptation activities through the AP-PLAT, the plan to host the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) Forum in September 2020.

(d) Innovation Challenge for Net Zero Carbon

The Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) held an event for roles of innovation towards net zero carbon. Minister Koizumi attended to welcome the “Challenge Zero” by Keidanren, and introduced actions by

Japanese corporations and actions by local governments as “Zero Carbon Companies” and “Zero Carbon Cities” respectively. Furthermore, Minister Koizumi commemorated the recent Nobel Prize awarded to Dr. Yoshino Akira for his contribution to lithium-ion batteries and highlighted Japan’s utmost contribution through innovation and international cooperation towards global-scale carbon neutrality.



Launching event for the Initiative on Life Cycle Management of Fluorocarbons



Side event on climate change and disaster prevention

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The Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP3) and Its Outcomes

The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP3) took place from 25 to 29 November 2019 at the International Conference Centre in Geneva. The Minamata Convention on Mercury is an agreement on concrete measures for reducing mercury-related risks throughout the entire lifecycle of mercury, from production, trade and usage, to emission and disposal, while ensuring the participation of both developed and developing countries. The convention, named after the city in Kumamoto Prefecture, demonstrates the global determination that health damages from mercury like the Minamata disease should never be repeated.

The Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

At the opening ceremony of COP3, the aim of the convention and the need to keep going were emphasised. Realising 113 parties (increased to 118 parties as of 10th March 2020) to the convention to respond to mercury pollution was celebrated.

The Devotion of International Communities

A series of plenary sessions and thematic sessions were convened during the first days of COP3 to discuss different issues on mercury management. The thematic sessions

addressed various technical issues, including the release and emission of mercury resulting from the open burning of waste and effectiveness evaluation.

Throughout the week, the delegates had worked in Contact Groups in order to reach agreement on all topics to become COP3 decisions.

Difficulties Coming to Agreement among the Parties

Towards the end of the week, there was a sense of urgency by some and fear by others as Contact Groups continued their discussions on the remaining issues through the night and into the early morning hours on the last day.

For example, amendments to Annex A on the phasing out of dental amalgams did not progress as the African Group proposed.

As for effectiveness evaluation, which will have a direct effect on the programme of convention for the coming years, many participants were left believing that COP3 had missed an important opportunity. The delegates could not come to a mutual conclusion by the end of the week and the ad-hoc technical expert group's proposal had to be reduced in scope.

After the closing plenary of the week-long meeting, the members of the Japanese delegation came out to the empty street around 3 a.m. wondering how a number of questions would play out over the next two years. Several decisions were made to move forward; however, at the same time the centrepiece decision on



The last plenary session at COP3

effectiveness evaluation was not as stringent as we wished it to be.

Towards COP4

Nonetheless, the strong engagement of the Convention and the parties in driving national, regional, and international efforts to address the toxicity of mercury will continue.

The annual COPs will shift to biannual COPs, with COP4 to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2021. Considering the available advanced alternatives and mercury-reduction technologies, Japan has achieved trust among the international community with more stringent regulations that have been introduced in Japan and due to cooperation with developing countries. The Japanese delegation is certain that progress will be made over the next two years. Japan's determination to lead the convention will also remain steadfast.

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The 21st Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM21)

Contributing to Global Environmental Issues Based on Japan-China-Korea Tripartite Cooperation



The 21st Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among Japan, China and Korea (TEMM21) was held on 23-24 November 2019 in Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka Prefecture. The environment ministers of Japan, China and the Republic of Korea were in attendance to review environmental cooperation between the three nations to date and acknowledge recent progress made in tripartite environmental cooperation. Likewise, the ministers reached agreement on the establishment of new priority areas for the next Tripartite Joint Action Plan (2020-2024), and adopted a Joint Communiqué.

Overview of TEMM21

The Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among Japan, China and Korea (TEMM) is hosted on a rotating basis and has been held annually since 1999. TEMM aims to bring the environment ministers of Japan, China and the Republic of Korea, the nations that form the core of East Asia, under one roof to conduct dialogue on environmental issues affecting the region and the entire globe and to strengthen cooperative relations. TEMM, held every year without fail up to the 2019 21st meeting, is an extremely valuable framework for ministerial level meetings.

In attendance at TEMM21 were Koizumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, Japan, Cho Myung-Rae, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, and Li Ganjie, Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China. The ministers first spoke directly, exchanging opinions on various issues including marine plastic litter countermeasures, climate change countermeasures, countermeasures on alien species including red imported fire ants, and air pollution. The ministers reviewed tripartite environmental cooperation to date and acknowledged recent progress. Next, the ministers reached an agreement on



Signing Ceremony for the Joint Communiqué



TEMM21 Main Meeting

the establishment of priority areas for the formulation of the new Tripartite Joint Action Plan that would lay out concrete environmental cooperation activities between the three countries for five years starting in 2020, and a Joint Communiqué was adopted.

Outcomes of TEMM21

As revealed in Minister Koizumi's press conference statement, "If Japan, China and Korea move, the world will move," the three countries have a great responsibility to the global environment.

Five years have passed since formulation of the current Tripartite Joint Action Plan, making it necessary to take into account the many environment-related developments during that time, including formulation of the SDGs, conclusion and entry into force of the Paris Agreement, the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision shared at the G20 Osaka Summit in June 2019, and the post-2020 targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity of this year. Japan, China and the Republic of Korea have a role to play not only in cooperation between neighboring East Asian nations, but also as nations that point the way forward in addressing global environmental issues.

As such, the following

fundamental principles were put forth at TEMM21 to ensure that the Tripartite Joint Action Plan to start in 2020 is based on these global trends and will more effectively contribute to providing solutions to global problems such as achievement of the SDGs.

Firstly, in order to "maximise synergies among the priority areas", synergies among SDGs will be taken into consideration in the individual environmental areas that are the focus of TEMM activities and interlinkages will be strengthened.

Secondly, TEMM will aim to expand its multilateral framework to include not only activities among the three nations, but also through promotion of the "3+x modality", such as the G20 and ASEAN+3.

Finally, TEMM activities are to be developed on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefits, and will take into account each country's situation to pursue effective and efficient implementation.

Based on the above principles, the following eight priority areas were set for formulation of the next Joint Action Plan.

- (1) Air Quality Improvement,
- (2) 3R/Circular Economy/Zero Waste City,
- (3) Marine and Water

Environment Management, (4) Climate Change, (5) Biodiversity, (6) Chemical Management and Environmental Emergency Response, (7) Transition to Green Economy, and (8) Environmental Education, Public Awareness and Engagement.

View ahead to TEMM22

The next Tripartite Joint Action Plan is expected to be adopted at TEMM22 to be held in 2020. The Ministry of the Environment of Japan intends to continue to strengthen environmental cooperation between Japan, China and the Republic of Korea based on the outcomes of TEMM21, namely the three fundamental principles and the eight priority areas.

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Efforts to Date of Fukushima Regional Environmental Office, Ministry of the Environment

The Road to Recovery Following the Great East Japan Earthquake



Aerial view of Interim Storage Facility

On 11th March 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred and the ensuing tsunami caused an accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant (NPP). Radioactive materials were emitted into the air, leading to the unavoidable evacuation of residents from certain areas mainly in Fukushima Prefecture. In August of the same year, the national government put into force an act on special measures, and has been making efforts to improve the situation since then.

In January 2012, the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) established the “Fukushima Environmental

Regeneration Office” (later renamed the “Fukushima Regional Environmental Office”) to handle off-site remediation in Fukushima.

Radioactive materials must be “removed”, “blocked off” and “kept away” to reduce the impact of radiation on public health. Accordingly, the following work has been conducted.

Decontamination

MOE implemented decontamination works such as soil removal in areas where people live (completed as planned).



Temporary Storage Sites

“Temporary Storage Sites” were established for temporarily storing



removed soil generated during the decontamination process. The soil is covered with water-proof sheets so as not to release radiation.

Interim Storage Facility (Okuma and Futaba Towns)

This facility (1,600 ha) was established to store and manage the soil and waste safely.

Transportation

Removed soil will be transported from all “Temporary Storage Sites” in Fukushima Prefecture to the “Interim Storage Facility”. The total volume is approximately 14 million m³.



Volume reduction and recycling (Nagadoro Borough, Iitate Village)

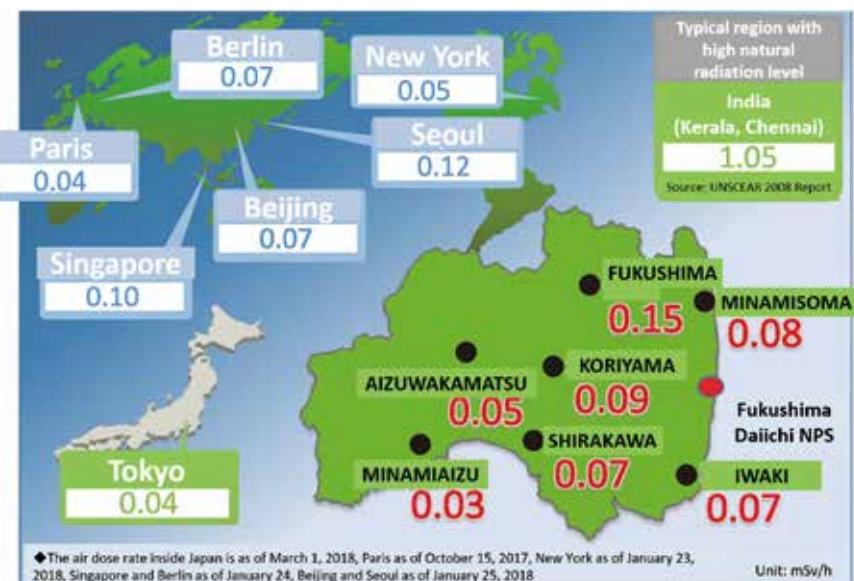
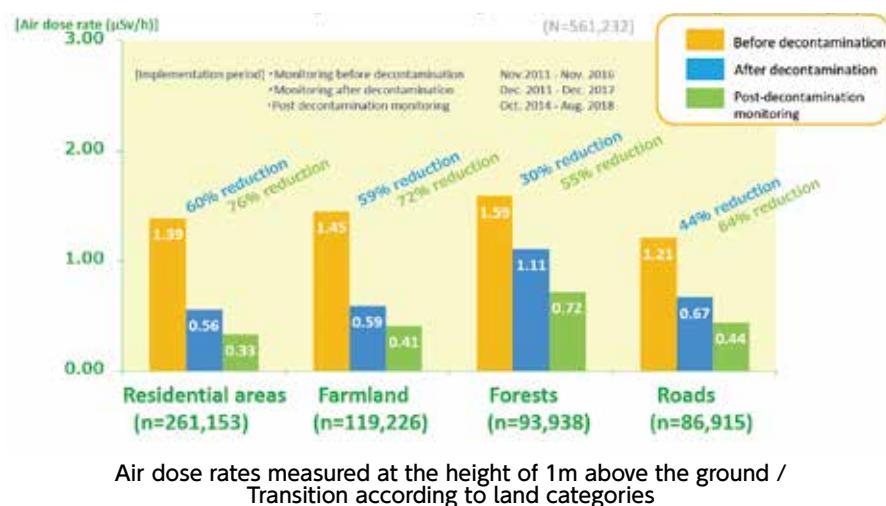


MOE has been conducting a model demonstration project for volume reduction and recycling of the removed soil for final disposal.

Waste disposal

Waste contaminated with radioactive material is treated by incineration to reduce the volume.

The results of these projects have shown that the air dose rates of radiation have dropped significantly and evacuation orders have been lifted in all Evacuation Order Areas



Comparison of air dose rates of Fukushima and major cities around the world

except for Difficult-to-Return Zones designated after the NPP accident.

When compared to areas around the world, the current air dose rates in Fukushima are the same as other major cities.

We will continue our efforts to eliminate misconceptions and share correct information with the international community.



See the Ministry of the Environment website for details.
<http://josen.env.go.jp/en/>

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Yakushima National Park

Japan's most impressive mountainous island and volcanic island teeming with life

Yakushima Island boasts some of the most stunning natural landscapes in the world, from its mountains, the highest peaks in the Kyushu region, to its giant trees towering out of moss-covered forests. Kuchinoerabu Island is a lush green forest-covered volcanic island that is home to rare plants and animals. The Yakushima National Park is formed by these two neighbouring islands with completely differing natural environments.

Yakushima Island, Japan's most impressive mountainous island

A World Heritage site, Yakushima Island is located approximately 60 kilometres south of the Kyushu mainland, with the Kuroshio Current flowing around it. The island's circumference is about 132 kilometres, with Kyushu's tallest peak, Mt. Miyanoura (1,936 km), at its centre. In fact, the eight tallest peaks in Kyushu are all located on this most impressive mountainous island, leading its mountains to be called the Alps of the Sea. The warm, wet vapor of the Kuroshio Current collides with these tall mountains, soaking the island in heavy rains. Pure water flowing in the rivers is clean enough to drink, and moss and ferns abound in the island's high humidity. The stunning forest landscapes, with giant Yakusugi cedar trees, some several thousands of years old, cannot be seen anywhere else in the world. As one climbs the paths up to the mountain tops, changes in vegetation and scenery can be enjoyed as diverse plant species grow at different altitudes.



Views of Yakushima mountain peaks and forest



Erabu flying fox of Kuchinoerabu Island

Kuchinoerabu Island, a volcanic island teeming with life

Located only 12 kilometres from Yakushima Island, Kuchinoerabu Island's natural environment is entirely different from Yakushima's. Although its volcanoes are still active, the island is covered by broadleaf evergreen forests. Rare animals that cannot be found on Yakushima, such as the Erabu flying fox, inhabit the island. The island retains a natural coastline with a variety of features, from steep cliffs carved by pounding waves and fantastically-shaped rocks, to quiet coves and tide pools.



English website for the Yakushima National Park
<http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/yakushima/index.html>

MIZUKAWA Maki

Active Ranger
 Kyusyu Regional Environment Office
 Yakushima Ranger Office

