

# SOCIOECONOMIC REDESIGN AND THREE TRANSITIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in 2020 as a major new crisis, in addition to the climate change crisis. These two crises are profoundly intertwined. To deal with both crises, it is essential for humanity to bring about social reform to improve the environment, economy, and society in an integrated manner, conserve biodiversity, and reestablish symbiosis with nature.

For this reason, Japan's environmental policy is focused on three transitions: transition to a decarbonized society, transition to a circular economy, and transition to a decentralized society. These transitions call for a radical socioeconomic redesign to build communities based on the ideas of circular and ecological economies and encourage people to transform their individual lifestyles.

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## 1

## MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE “ONLINE PLATFORM” ON A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

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In September 2020, the Ministry of the Environment hosted a ministerial meeting of the “Online Platform” on a Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19 with full support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

While the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UNFCCC was postponed, the

online ministerial meeting contributed to strengthening international solidarity and enhancing the momentum for global climate action. Ninety-six participating countries shared and sent out strong messages about their visions and concrete actions to face the two crises of COVID-19 and climate change.

## 2

## DECLARATION OF GHG NET-ZERO BY 2050

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Many countries around the world are moving forward with a green recovery and other initiatives to achieve economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, by pursuing more ambitious climate targets, and creating more sustainable socioeconomic systems. The pandemic has altered the political and economic structures of the world. We must promote climate actions and energy strategies in integration with the responses to this structural change.

In this context, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared in his policy speech to the 203rd Session of the Diet on October 26, 2020, that by 2050, Japan would aim to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net-zero, that is, to realize a carbon-neutral, decarbonized society.

## 3

## LEADERS SUMMIT ON CLIMATE

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On April 22 and 23, 2021, the US hosted Leaders Summit on Climate, which was attended by the heads of state and senior representatives of some 40 countries and regions.

At the summit, the leaders discussed raising their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), net-zero GHG emissions by 2050, and the need to phase out coal-fired power plants. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga stated that Japan would take a big step toward overcoming this global issue. Japan

aims to reduce its GHG emissions by 46% in fiscal year 2030 from its fiscal year 2013 levels, setting an ambitious target that is aligned with the long-term goal of achieving net-zero by 2050. Furthermore, Japan will continue strenuous efforts in its challenge to meet the lofty goal of reducing its emissions by 50%. Thus, he announced a new target that was significantly higher than the previous target of 26%.