

Online Platform Ministerial Meeting :
Chair's summary
~Redesign and Three Transitions~

September 11, 2020

- While the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the world's socio-economic systems, climate change and environmental degradations do not subside as extreme rainfalls and tropical cyclones continue to cause floods in many parts of the world, and increased temperatures and low precipitation cause wildfires. Furthermore, 2020 is an important year for making the Paris Agreement fully operational, and for communicating and updating NDCs, which lead to the long term low emission development strategies.
- The novel coronavirus disease has dealt a massive blow to the global economy. Now is the time for us to make a start towards a vigorous recovery. The trigger for that will be a virtuous cycle of environment and growth.
- As part of our recovery from the pandemic, we must move forward with tackling both the climate change and environmental degradation. We have to take concrete actions to raise the level of ambition and concrete measures both in mitigation and adaptation.
- To address these two crises, it is essential for all countries to cooperate and enhance inclusiveness. We must build and keep up the momentum ahead of COP26, and encourage a sense of solidarity in climate actions.
- The Ministry of the Environment Japan launched the "Platform for Redesign 2020" to bring together information on countries' concrete actions and knowledge on climate and environmental policies, in the context of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The objective is to make sure that climate action is not quarantined amid the pandemic and to keep building the global momentum.
- With full support from the UNFCCC Secretariat, Japan invited all UNFCCC parties to participate in the online ministerial meeting and asked them to contribute video messages and information on relevant climate and environment policies integrated in their recovery plans, that would be shared on the Platform website.
- On 3 September 2020, the Online Ministerial Meeting for the Platform for Redesign 2020 was held. The meeting was chaired by Mr. KOIZUMI Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment Japan, with full support of Ms. Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary. Opening messages were provided by Mr. ABE Shinzo, Prime Minister of Japan and Mr. António Guterres, UN Secretary-General. A total of 96 countries,

including presidencies of COP25, COP26, and Pre-COP26, joined the meeting through various forms, such as joining the meeting online, sending video messages or sharing information on the Platform. Additionally, 38 non-state stakeholders also made proactive contributions (As of 3 September).

- The meeting resulted in the following visions and concrete measures being shared by participants.

(Redesign and the Three Transitions)

- We stand at a critical turning point in our civilization, as the coronavirus pandemic has affected both our health and economies. Our task is not to return to the pre-pandemic world. Redesigning our socio-economic system for a more sustainable and resilient world is essential.
- Redesign requires three transitions as its foundation; the transition to a decarbonized society, the transition to a circular economy, and the transition to a decentralized society.

[Transition to a decarbonized society]

- While our recovery from the pandemic will be accompanied with a rise in global energy demand, we cannot fall back to the same rebound in emissions that followed economic stimulus packages from the 2008 financial crisis. Therefore it is critical to address the issues of decarbonization of both energy sectors through the development of renewable energies and the social implementation of hydrogen, as well as decarbonization in the process of energy use in industrial sectors and households.

[Transition to a circular economy]

- In addition, it is important to promote the economic recovery policy with climate policy/environmental protection policy to create a virtuous cycle of environment and growth. Redesigning socio-economic systems for transition to a circular economy is therefore reachable by improving resource productivity by promoting resource circulation, and sustainable use of natural resources as a business strategy in private sectors, over entire supply chains, in addition to recycling and proper waste treatment.

[Transition to a decentralized society]

- The rapid propagation of COVID-19 has highlighted the limitations of a centralized society. In addressing the pandemic we should continue to focus on the importance of designing new, flexible and resilient societies with new ways of working - including tele-working, lifestyles change, digitalization, introduction of a decentralized energy

system, and community engagement.

(Measures in various sectors and fields, and Cross-cutting issues)

- Reference was made to the importance of communicating and enhancing their NDC and committing to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, as part of their recovery strategy from the coronavirus pandemic.
- Participants also exchanged views and experience on concrete measures to be implemented in key sectors while enhancing climate actions: in energy sector, through further utilization of renewable energies and the realization of a hydrogen society; in transportation sector, through the electrification of the transportation network and dissemination of electric vehicles; in urban planning sector, through energy-saving technology in housing and urban planning; in adaptation, through sustainable infrastructure, water/disaster risk reduction, and biodiversity measures.
- Many participants stressed the importance of designing and implementing recovery measures from the coronavirus pandemic while addressing climate change measures at the same time. Countries shared their opinions on cross-cutting issues such as the role of governments and non-state stakeholders, as well as the importance and necessity of science-based solutions and formulation of strategies adapted to sectoral needs. The importance of innovation as a solution to climate change issues was also referred by many countries.

(Multi-stakeholders opinions, actions, and international cooperation.)

- To ensure an inclusive participation, governments and non-state stakeholders from all around the world participated (in total, 134 governments and non-state organizations, as of 3 September), and shared their will and concrete actions to tackle the two crises, and enhance international cooperation.

(Expectation to the Platform for Redesign 2020)

- It was widely recognized that Platform for Redesign 2020, which launched the concept of “Redesign” and stimulated discussions, would be instrumental in maintaining momentum ahead of COP26. It was also recognized the outcomes from this meeting will be shared with the international community and serve as reference in future climate meetings, including COP26. Many countries and other participants expressed their appreciation to Minister KOIZUMI, the Government of Japan and the UNFCCC Secretariat for launching this initiative. Participants also expressed their expectation for the website of the Platform for Redesign 2020 to serve as a hub to share information and experiences on recovery plans from the pandemic and measures against both climate change and environmental degradation.

Session1 Panel Discussion: Redesign of Socio-economy with Three Transitions

The session 1 was facilitated by Dr. Andrew Steer, WRI President and CEO, and joined by Minister KOIZUMI, Ms. Mary Robinson, representative of The Elders, former President of Ireland, Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, GEF-CEO, former Costa Rican Minister of Environment and Energy, Dr. Mark Carney, COP26 Finance Advisor, and Dr. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

1. Recognition of effectiveness of Redesign with the three transitions

- Recovery efforts from the coronavirus pandemic should tackle the climate change at the same time. We must not return to pre-pandemic socioeconomic systems; but rather, we must redesign our society and economy to be more sustainable and resilient to address the two global crises. Now we stand at a key turning point.
- We need to develop new initiatives focusing on sustainability as part of our economic recovery, and we must plan/implement policies with the aim to redesign society as a whole. The three transitions toward a decarbonized society, a circular economy, and a decentralized society will be the cornerstone of this redesign.
- As the coronavirus pandemic is a byproduct of the conflict between humans and the nature, we need to take into account the importance of nature-based solutions and the symbiotic relationship between humans and our environment. Tackling climate change and environmental degradation as part of our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic will enable all of us to achieve the SDGs on a global scale by 2030.
- Implementing the three transitions will help to prevent future environmental risks, and can be seen as a form of “vaccine” for our socioeconomic system. The three transitions are a cost-effective way to prepare for future crises.

2. Three important cross-cutting issues indicated in Session 1

[Facts and science based policies]

- To address both climate change measures and recovery measures from the coronavirus pandemic, it is vital to formulate policies based on facts and science. To do this, we first need to be able to improve our climate forecasting ability, engage in serious discussions on policies that prevent and minimize impacts, and steadily implement those policies.

[Role of finance and investment]

- Climate change poses a risk to financial stability. While countries are taking economic measures to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, they must include climate change countermeasures. For empowering a just energy transition, re-investing in industrialization, and promoting technology and services more sustainably, taking various measures to mobilize finance is a possible answer towards prevention of global warming.

[International cooperation and on-going discussion]

- The redesign and three transition will require, along with national policies / actions, enhanced international cooperation among countries. A dedicated platform can facilitate sharing information and dissemination. Platform for Redesign 2020 is expected to serve to fulfil that role and strengthen international solidarity.

3. Role of government and non-state stakeholders

- Leadership by national governments is vital in policymaking and developing strategies such as the long term strategies. In taking such leadership, it is essential to involve and coordinate among all relevant ministries and agencies and other stakeholders.
- Decarbonized policy and measures by local governments are crucial as they directly link to community. Governments' support to those actions will make irreversible movement towards a decarbonized society. ("Zero carbon city" was notably mentioned as one of good examples).
- The session also highlighted that the various actions by private sectors, including promotion of ESG finance such as TCFD, SBT RE100 are important.
- Transitions to a decentralized society, which aims to build resilience from community level, could be supported by several dimensions of climate justice: the most vulnerables; gender; intergenerational equity; different pathways needed for just transition.
- A new kind of partnership - bringing different players from the bottom to the top down, is needed.

Session 2 Ministerial Roundtable: COVID-19 recovery and climate/environmental measures and actions

Session 2 was facilitated by Mr. Selwin Hart, Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on Climate Action, and participating countries' statements on their measures were presented. Some examples are indicated below.

[Strengthening Climate Action (investment, finance, long term strategy, cross-cutting issues)]

- Various measures to enhance NDC and commitment to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 were introduced.
- Countries presented examples of aligning their economic recovery measures from the coronavirus pandemic implemented in various sectors, with their long-term strategies and national plans. This includes policies such as green jobs, supply chain restructuring, efficient use of resources and waste management, and circular economy.
- In parallel with economic and employment policies, the need for energy security was emphasized. Technological innovations, including mixed combustion of ammonia produced by renewable energy and the utilization CCUS/carbon recycling are important. In addition, significance of integral changes in lifestyles were also recognized.
- Embodying these measures through countries' NDC and long-term strategies will lead to the achievement of redesign with the three transitions.

[Energy / electrification or digitalization]

- Most of countries presented measures to promote renewable energy introduction. Some countries are accelerating the introduction of renewable energy to production bases as part of the restructuring of supply chains during this coronavirus pandemic.
- Various countries mentioned hydrogen policy and measures. Realizing a hydrogen society is a key to achieve global decarbonization. It is recognized that hydrogen has advanced to the social implementation stage by efforts of countries conducting on-going pilot projects such as the production of hydrogen by renewable energy and its use of in the domestic sector as well as fuel cell vehicles and buses. Several countries have started formulating their hydrogen strategies following the measures and strategies of the leading countries.
- The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic have highlighted the need for behavioral, economic, and societal changes to increase energy efficiency. Several countries are taking measures to promote the digitalization of various systems and the development of e-commerce. In order to provide for the increasing demand for digitalization, the importance of zero-emission data centers powered by renewable energy was also mentioned.

[Transportation]

- While countries have taken measures to promote electric vehicles, some countries are accelerating their support measures for electric vehicles or electronic scooters in response to the increase in delivery services.
- Many countries introduced measures in the transportation sector such as development of low-carbon/zero carbon public transportation networks and bicycle lanes. Research and development of related technologies are also being promoted.
- Human mobility over national borders has been limited in the coronavirus pandemic. As the aviation industry was severely impacted by the mobility restrictions, many countries are imposing conditions on airline companies' bailouts on their commitment to decarbonization.

[Urban planning, measures in building sector, decentralization]

- Some countries have taken measures of energy conservation technologies and measures together with measures for reducing densely populated urban spaces and promoted infectious disease control in the building sector such as introduction of high efficiency ventilation equipment.
- Countries also presented various examples of designing smart cities, building societies with empowered communities.

[Adaptation: infrastructure, water/DRR]

- Countries are implementing adaptation measures, particularly those related to disaster risk reduction (DRR), paying attention to hygiene and infectious disease control, and employment measures through DRR including flood control.
- Countries underlined the adaptation measures like infrastructure design by considering climate change impacts. The importance of mainstreaming those adaptation measures in various policy documents, strategies and plans were also presented.

[Transition to a circular economy and decentralized society]

- Some countries presented measures on appropriate waste management including infectious medical waste.
- For redesigning sustainable and resilient socio-economic system in the recovery process, it is fundamental to fulfil the potential of community based approach for development. Interventions stressed the key role of communities in political decision making and their governance in implementing measures.

Session 3 Panel Discussion: Non-State Stakeholders Interests

In Session 3, representatives from non-state stakeholders discussed their roles and expectations towards both measures for recovery from coronavirus pandemic and for climate change. This session was facilitated by Mr. Gonzalo Muñoz, High-Level Climate Champion of Chile, and joined by Mr. Paul Polman, Co-founder and Chair, IMAGINE; Honorary Chair of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Ms. Kobie Brand, Regional Director; ICLEI Africa, and Ms. Sharon Burrow, General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Video messages by representatives from Japanese local governments and youth organizations were also presented. The views expressed in this session are as follows.

- It is essential to have multi-stakeholders engagement in the policy-making process, and throughout policies' implementation as part of the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic that could contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. This means that it is not just a recovery to the same system before the pandemic, but redesign a just transition to a new socio-economic system that is more resilient and inclusive.
- To this end, it is vital to set up opportunities for continuous dialogues with, and input from, the youth, local/regional governments, businesses, finance sector, civil society, etc., as well as to seek international cooperation and to share information. Climate talks centered on voices from the youth are planned as a part of Pre-COP26 next year. The session also recognized the need for multi-generational engagement with the inclusion of the youth in policy-making process.
- The corporate world recognizes the necessity to align their business model with the ESG framework to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. It is also recognized that the current economic system was created in a time when money was scarce and resource abundant; that has changed and now we live in a world where money is abundant and resources scarce. A concept of “regenerative economy” which generates new job or value through circular economy was also presented.
- Our shared direction is to realize build back better and to achieve redesign that embodies and evolves the concept of build back better, ensuring multi-stakeholders engagement to lead a “Co-design of the redesign process”.