

**Concept Note**

**3rd Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals of  
China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea**

**7 March 2024, Lotte Hotel Seoul (Emerald Room), Republic of Korea**

**Background**

Climate action has accelerated with increased attention from the global community. For the first time in climate change negotiations, the global community reached a remarkable consensus on a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels with the first completion of the Global Stocktake at the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC CoP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, ensuring the right path forward under the Paris Agreement. The first Global Stocktake also recognized the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels in order to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

However, the climate crisis is alarming and dire, with the time remaining to keep global temperatures below 1.5°C already imminent and the next two years are crucial. At CoP28, Parties agreed on targets for the Global Goal on Adaptation and launched negotiations on a new collective goal on climate finance ahead of CoP29. The new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are also expected to be consistent with the 1.5°C scenario, which will be discussed and renewed at CoP30 in 2025. These measures need to be consolidated and concerted with relevant global frameworks to enhance synergies and boost more effective and efficient implementation towards net zero emissions by mid-century. There is a great deal of expectation for ambitious goals and targets across relevant global platforms, and it is imperative to build on that momentum to avoid falling behind.

The efforts towards carbon neutrality among China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea have intensified more than ever before, as evidenced by their announcement to achieve net-zero by 2050/2060. In November 2023, the three countries further reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals and to drive enhanced climate action across mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support at the 24th Tripartite Environment

Ministers Meeting (TEMM24) held in Nagoya, Japan. In addition, the three countries advanced climate actions beyond Northeast Asia by bringing the topic to the 26th ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3) Summit, where the need for various technologies for achieving low-carbon economy was emphasized through the Chairman's Statement. Multilateral action and close cooperation among the three countries are important, signifying a solid leadership for collective action addressing the climate crisis.

### **Digital Innovation and Just Transition**

The transformative potential of digital innovation should not be overlooked to increase the efficiency of the means of implementation towards carbon neutrality. CoP28 highlights the critical role of technology development and transfer in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. It urges global cooperation, especially with the private sector, to address gaps in technology adoption and to rapidly deploy existing and new technologies. The CoP28 also emphasizes inclusive international cooperation for research and innovation and recognizes the need for rapid deployment of clean technologies. Meanwhile, the challenges and risks should be carefully noted. It is therefore critical that innovative technologies are used wisely and strategically for addressing the climate crisis in line with sustainable development while encouraging and promoting digital innovation at an accelerated pace in this regard.

The work program on just transition pathways was established in the CoP27, following the CoP26 Glasgow Climate Pact that recognized the need for a 'just transition' in decarbonization. The CoP28 further underlined the need for a holistic, inclusive, and practical approach to the just transition. While countries incorporating just transition into NDCs and Long-Term Climate Strategies in achieving carbon neutrality, there has been a higher requirement to address the impacts of decarbonization on consumers, employers, and communities as well as guide a successful economic transformation across every sector and industry. The importance of ensuring that vulnerable populations including locally led groups, women, and youth should also be considered in the just transition. There is merit to explore the potential of digital innovation to implement just transition that is holistic, inclusive and practical.

### **Forum Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

The First Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea was jointly organized in November 2021 by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Climate Action Team at the Executive

Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (EOSG/CAT), and the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS), a first of its kind, bringing together government officials and experts from leading think tanks and policy advisors from the three countries with a focus on carbon neutrality. Since then, the Forum thrives to outline the strategic actions and priorities for achieving carbon neutrality, and to exchange views on the challenges and solutions of transition.

Building on the two previous forums, the Third Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals will focus on digital innovation and just transition. The Third Forum aims to serve as a hub for the exchange of policies, measures and practices in various cross-cutting sectors among high-level government officials, experts and international organizations in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to ensure the pathway to carbon neutrality.

The outcomes of the Forum will be presented to the dialogue on subregional cooperation during the 80<sup>th</sup> ESCAP Commission Session to be held on 22 -26 April 2024 under the theme of "*Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific*" and will also be reported to the 25th Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM25) held in the Republic of Korea.

### Forum Overview

- **Co-organizers**
  - The Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS)
  - The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
  - Climate Action Team of the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General (EOSG/CAT)
- **Date:** 7 March 2024
- **Venue:** Lotte Hotel, Seoul, Republic of Korea (in-person)
- **Language:** English (with simultaneous interpretation in Chinese, Japanese and Korean)
- **Audience:** By registration only

### Forum Agenda

<b>Time (GMT+9)</b>	<b>7 March 2024</b>
<b>09:00-09:30</b>	<b>Opening session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana (Under-Secretary-General of the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) [video message]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr. LEE Hee-sup (Secretary-General, Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat)</li> <li>○ Mr. Selwin Charles Hart (Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Climate Action and Assistant Secretary-General for the Climate Action Team) [video message]</li> <li>● Keynote speech: Mr. LIU, Zhenmin (Special Envoy for Climate Change, China)</li> </ul> <p>Group Photo (Opening Session speakers; Session moderators and speakers)</p>
09:30-10:40	<p><b>Session 1: High-level dialogue on updates on pathways to the carbon neutrality goals of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea and regional cooperation</b> (<i>macro/policy level</i>)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren (Director of External Affairs, Green Climate Fund)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr. CHEN Zhihua (Deputy Director General, National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, China)</li> <li>○ Mr. SUGA Yoshinori (Director, Ministry of the Environment, Japan)</li> <li>○ Mr. LEE Young Seok (Director General, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea)</li> <li>○ Q&amp;A (10 min)</li> </ul>
10:40-10:50	<b>Break</b>
10:50-12:10	<p><b>Session 2: Accelerating progress to achieving carbon neutrality goals through digital innovation</b> (<i>sectoral level</i>)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Anne Juepner (Director, UNDP Seoul Policy Centre)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr. XU Jintao (Professor, Peking University, China)</li> <li>○ Mr. KOSHIZUKA Noboru (Professor, The University of Tokyo III, Japan)</li> <li>○ Ms. KANG Min-kyung (Research Fellow, Incheon Carbon Neutrality Center, Incheon Institute, Republic of Korea)</li> <li>○ Mr. Gankhuyag Dagva (Chief Infrastructure Officer, Newcom Group, Mongolia)</li> <li>○ Q&amp;A (20 min)</li> </ul>
12:10-13:30	<b>Lunch break</b>
13:30-14:50	<p><b>Session 3: Ensuring just transition in achieving carbon neutrality goals</b> (<i>actors'/stakeholders' level</i>)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Hyeyoung Kim (Head, Office of the United Nations</p>

	<p>Project Office on Governance (UNPOG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr. GAO Chen (CEO, Sinotrans Limited Seoul Office)</li> <li>○ Mr. NAM Seung Hong (Director of Carbon Neutrality and Economy Division, Chungcheongnam-do, Republic of Korea)</li> <li>○ Mr. Simon Gilby (Sustainable Development Officer, UN Office for Sustainable Development)</li> <li>○ Mr. Euan Low (Impact Lead for Energy &amp; Infrastructure, Green Climate Fund)</li>   <li>○ Q&amp;A (20 min)</li> </ul>
<p><b>14:50 -15:00</b></p>	<p><b>Closing session</b></p> <p>Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mr. LEE Hee-sup (Secretary-General, Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat)</li> <li>○ Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav (Head, ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office)</li> </ul>