

Concept Note

**2nd Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals of
China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea**

7 February 2023

Background

In a year where the global response to climate change had seemingly stalled and saw backsliding in some instances, momentum was regained to protect the global consensus to work to keep global temperature rise to 1.5C and to enable a landmark decision to create a loss and damage fund at the 27th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh, an important step for climate justice and demonstrating solidarity with vulnerable countries. The outcomes of COP27 also saw an unprecedented call to accelerate clean and just transitions to renewable energy and for an overhaul of multilateral development banks to make them fit-for-purpose to address the climate emergency. Much work remains to ensure that past promises and decisions as well as the ones agreed to in Egypt are delivered, but also to bridge the gaps we face across the board on mitigation, adaptation, finance and loss and damage.

2023 will be a major inflection point on climate change with UN Secretary-General António Guterres's convening of a Climate Ambition Summit and the inaugural Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement to take place at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28). These two milestone events will build on each other to assess the global response to the climate crisis and how to effectively tackle it at the transformative levels and accelerated pace that is needed, when current existing national commitments are projected to take the world well past the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement to at least 2.4C.

Nearly 140 countries representing 88% of global greenhouse gas emissions have announced carbon neutrality or net-zero targets, including China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The mobilization of countries to adopt net-zero pledges is a needed step towards tackling the climate crisis, but as the window to keeping average global temperature rise to 1.5C is quickly closing, governments must now quickly act to develop and implement credible and feasible action plans to achieve the emissions reductions implied by their carbon neutrality goals. Particular attention must be paid to hard-to-abate sectors, including power, transportation

and heavy industry whose decarbonization will be crucial to achieving national net zero commitments and delivery of a Just Transition.

Doing so will not be an easy task and will require a whole-of-society and systemic approach, innovative governance and more robust multilateral cooperation for cost-effective actions and building resilience to the impacts of climate change on lives and livelihoods. Making this endeavor even more challenging is that governments and non-state actors will have to undergo this necessary undertaking at a time when societies face multiple global crises in addition to global emissions being at their highest level in human history and ever-worsening climate impacts.

Representing more than a quarter of global GDP and over a third of global carbon emissions, and as leading technology innovators, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea are uniquely placed to lead efforts to combat the climate crisis domestically, regionally and internationally. Their leadership to advance the global climate agenda will be critical to a transition to a renewable energy based and climate resilient future at home and abroad.

As we step into a year focused on transformational change to action and ambition to bridge the emissions gap, this Second Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals will build on the COP27 call to action on just renewable energy transitions as well as on areas for common action and collaboration identified at the First Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals that took place in November 2021, to help accelerate the implementation of the carbon neutrality goals of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. High-Level government officials, together with experts and international organizations sharing subnational and sectoral good practices, will share the latest strategies, measures and experiences of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to deliver carbon neutrality, and views on how they can individually and jointly mobilize support and cooperation to accelerate transitions to net-zero emissions domestically and in other countries.

The outcomes of the forum will be presented to the dialogue on subregional cooperation during the 79th ESCAP Commission Session to be held on 15-18 May 2023 under the theme of "*Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific*". It will also be reported to the 9th China-Japan-Korea Ministerial Conference on Transport and Logistics, as a progress of its Action Plan declared at the 8th Ministerial Conference.

Overview

- **Co-organizers:** ESCAP, TCS and CAT
- **Date:** 7 February 2023
- **Venue:** Virtual (Offline venue: TCS Secretariat in Seoul)
- **Language:** English (with simultaneous interpretation in Chinese, Japanese and Korean)

Provisional Agenda

Time (GMT+9)	7 February 2023
09:00-09:30	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remarks by ESCAP/TCS/CAT<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP○ Ms. Ou, Boqian, Secretary-General of Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat○ Mr. Selwin Charles Hart, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Climate Action and Assistant Secretary-General for the Climate Action Team• Keynote speech<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mr. Ban, Ki-moon, the Eighth Secretary General of the United Nations and Chairman of the Ban Ki-moon Foundation For a Better Future
09:30-11:00	Session 1: High-level dialogue on updated pathways to the carbon neutrality goals of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea and regional cooperation <p>This high-level session intends to present each country's recent developments to achieve its carbon neutrality goals, including through updated NDCs, credible implementation of policies and initiatives fostering regional cooperation for climate action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderator: Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Director of External Affairs, Green Climate Fund• Panelists<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mr. Kim, Sang Hyup, Co-Chairperson of the Presidential Commission on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth, Republic of Korea○ Mr. Zhao, Yingmin, Vice Minister, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of People's Republic of China○ Mr. Ono, Hiroshi, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Japan
11:00-11:10	Break

11:10- 12:20	<p>Session 2: Efforts of local government to achieve the carbon neutrality goals</p> <p>This session will present how local governments are contributing to the achievement of carbon neutrality goals in coordination with their national governments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Ms. Song, Jaemin, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Seoul National University • Panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Abe Shuichi, Governor of Nagano Prefecture, Japan ○ Mr. Sun, Xiaofeng, Vice Chairman of China-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City Administrative Committee, China ○ Mr. An, Jaesu, Director-General of the Climate & Environment Bureau, Chungcheongnam-do, Republic of Korea ○ Mr. Zhu, Shu, Regional Director, ICLEI East Asia Secretariat
12:20--13:40	<p>Lunch break</p>
13:40 - 14:50	<p>Session 3: Sectoral pathways to carbon neutrality - policy and technology options</p> <p>This session seeks to identify key policy and technology options for achieving carbon neutrality and opportunities for pathways in the energy and transport sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Mr. Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator, United Nations in China • Panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Matt Watson, Vice President, Energy Transition, Environmental Defense Fund ○ Mr. Yeren-Ulzii Batmunkh, Acting State Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Mongolia (Director-General of Energy Policy Planning Department) ○ Mr. Ye, Choong Yeol, Senior Research Fellow, Korea Transport Institute ○ Mr. Camille Bourgeon, Technical Officer, Marine Environment Division, International Maritime Organization
14:50 -15:00	<p>Closing session</p> <p>Remarks by TCS/ESCAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. OU Boqian, Secretary-General of TCS ○ Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head of East and North-East Asia Office, ESCAP