

Agenda 2. Environmental challenges related to the coronavirus disease pandemic in the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP/CED/2020/1)

Statement by Republic of Korea

Thank you, Chair.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Korean government, I would like to convey our gratitude to Madam Chair and UN ESCAP for hosting this important meeting despite daunting challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and environmental degradation all share a common cause: climate crises. In this regard, Korea sympathizes with the diagnosis that the ‘Planetary Health’ approach should be the starting point of our solution and that this approach should serve as the basis to build back better and greener from the pandemic.

This guiding principle needs to be supported by specific, actionable implementation strategies. As mentioned in the helpful and useful document for the agenda, Korea has embarked on the journey of Green New Deal – a greener, more sustainable and inclusive recovery with an aim toward carbon neutrality by 2050.

Korea’s Green New Deal is an action-oriented, five-year fiscal stimulus package that will help us overcome the current economic and climate crises. The Green New Deal focuses on three key areas, namely, green transition of urban and living infrastructure, decarbonization and decentralization of energy, and green industry innovation, along with considerations for regional balance and social safety net.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As pointed out in the document, global solidarity as well as regional collaboration is crucial to ensure that we do not revert back to the business as usual before the pandemic. To that end, Korea plans to actively share the experiences of Green New Deal and 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy and to fully support the developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region with their recovery efforts.

In particular, the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth (SINGG) has provided low carbon development support since 2006 together with UN ESCAP and now it will begin its 4th phase from 2021 with specific focus on helping the countries tackle climate change and build back better and greener.

Also, together with UN ESCAP, Korea plans to support better air quality management in the region using the Korea's geostationary environmental monitoring satellite, thereby contributing to the Planetary Health.

Distinguished delegates,

As the paper clearly warns us, we need to stay vigilant to the “wake-up calls” from our Planet, so that we can gather ourselves toward the paths of green, sustainable, and inclusive recovery. Korea stands ready to provide further support.

Thank you, Madam Chair.