

Towards “Green Recovery”: overcome the coronavirus crisis and tackle the climate crisis

The spread of the COVID-19 infection has already taken lives of many people and has seriously affected the economy, corporate management, employment, and even social life both in Japan and in the world. It goes without saying that the most important thing right now is that not only the national and local governments, but also non state actors such as companies should take all possible measures to stop the spread of infection as soon as possible.

While prioritizing these urgent efforts to address the coronavirus crisis, what we must not forget is to continue and strengthen efforts to overcome another crisis facing humanity, the climate crisis.

The stagnation of economic activity caused by the spread of infection is predicted to curb recent energy consumption and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. However, what is needed to overcome the climate crisis is not a short-term emission reduction due to reduced economic activity, but a continuous and substantial reduction in emissions that is compatible with economic growth a transformation into a decarbonized social and economic system.

If the efforts to tackle the climate crisis are delayed, natural disasters that threaten human lives such as typhoons, heat waves, droughts and floods will become uncontrollable. In addition, climate change is predicted to lead to the spread of pre-existing infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, which could again cause the immense impact that the world is experiencing due to the COVID-19 right now.

Discussions on economic measures after the coronavirus crisis have begun both in the world and in Japan. In Europe, which has led climate action not only the national governments of various countries, but also a group of diverse companies have proposed “green recovery”, in which investment for economic recovery contributes to climate action.

Even in Japan, it is necessary to make recovery from the COVID-19 crisis consistent with efforts toward the transition to a decarbonized society. Many companies and local governments participating in Japan Climate Initiative have taken the lead in efforts such as the expansion of renewable energy represented by RE100 and declaration of carbon neutrality. In order to prevent the spread of infection, there is also a positive movement that telework, which is important for energy efficiency, is spreading rapidly.

We declare that we will continue and strengthen our efforts towards decarbonization, and also we call on the Japanese government for making the recovery from the coronavirus crisis “Green Recovery” that contributes to the transition towards a decarbonized society, rather than fixing its dependence on fossil fuels.

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The Steering Committee of Japan Climate Initiative

The Steering Committee of Japan Climate Initiative: CDP Japan, ICLEI Japan, Japan Climate Leaders’ Partnership (Japan-CLP), Network of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Business and Energy Future, The Frontier Network (TFN), Renewable Energy Institute, WWF Japan