

Message from Japan Climate Initiative to the Government of Japan

Now is the time to accelerate renewable energy deployment
-Calling for stronger climate change action in the midst of the fossil energy crisis-

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has resulted in oil and natural gas prices soaring globally, destabilizing the world's energy supply. This geopolitical context has given credence to the old narrative in Japan for the need to rely on fossil fuels to achieve stable supply. However, the European Union strategy outlining aims to end energy dependence on Russia, published in early March, focuses on accelerating the supply of renewable energy, such as solar power and green hydrogen. Germany, in particular, has announced a bill to cover almost 100% of its domestic power supply with renewable energy by 2035.

Renewable energy accounts for more than 40% of Europe's power supply, while the comparable figure for Japan is around 20%. Japan's heavy reliance on fossil fuels creates significant instability in the markets during oil and natural gas price fluctuations. More than ever, Japan's priorities should be to reduce the total amount of energy used, through the promotion of energy conservation and efficiency, and to accelerate the deployment of domestically produced renewable energy, which is unaffected by the geopolitical climate. Some have expressed a desire to restart nuclear power generation in Japan, but the Nuclear Regulatory Authority Japan has clearly expressed its intention not to take any special measures, stating that "no compromise on safety is allowed". The situation in Ukraine has also revealed the vulnerability of nuclear power during times of crisis or war, and its weakness in sustainability remains the same, with no established method for the disposal of radioactive waste.

In Japan, the cost of solar has now fallen to under 10 JPY per kWh, and many companies are developing and procuring renewable electricity through PPAs. Local governments are working to expand the introduction of solar power by establishing promotion zones and legislating its inclusion in new building developments.

The Government of Japan is in the process of formulating a 'Clean Energy Strategy', due by June this year. This strategy must focus on promoting renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, to provide 40-50% of Japan's power needs by 2030, as the Japan Climate Initiative called for last year.

The Sixth Assessment Report of Working Group III of the IPCC, published on 4 April, warns that global temperature rise will reach 3.2°C under current policies. Greenhouse gas emissions need to peak by 2025 at the latest, and a 43% reduction (compared to 2019) by 2030 is essential to achieve the 1.5°C target agreed at COP26.

Even during periods of global upheaval and fossil energy crises, climate action must not be allowed to take a back seat.

We pledge to strengthen action in our own efforts and through local partnerships, and at the same time, call on the Japanese government to push even harder for the expansion of renewable energy.