

Japan's new mid-term target is anything but ambitious:

A 2020 reduction target of 3.1% compared to 1990 levels
(3.8% compared to 2005 levels)

In conjunction with the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP19) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, after the review of 25% reduction target from 1990 by 2020, today, the Japanese government announced their new target of 3.8% greenhouse gas emission reduction compared to 2005 levels by 2020. This means that Japan will be writing off the efforts of the Kyoto Protocol's 1st commitment period and will increase greenhouse gas emissions from 1990.

At COP 19, one of the key issues at COP19 negotiations is to raise our ambitions. No matter what the domestic situation is in Japan, this new target is nothing if not unambitious and there is no doubt that the international community will strongly question about it.

New target put a damper on international negotiations:

In the Inter-government Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report, it was announced that climate change is rapidly progressing. The Arctic sea ice and glaciers are melting, sea levels continue to rise, and we are experiencing never-before-seen rises in temperatures. In addition, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced in a report entitled "The Emissions Gap Report 2013" (November 5th) that a 2°C warming limit is too large a gap compared to present temperatures and that stricter policies are necessary. Based on these reports, how a large number of countries can improve their targets and how we can narrow this gap will be important themes at COP19. Of course, as a developed country, Japan needs to be seen as a leader in these issues.

"No nuclear power" should not be a reason for increased emissions:

After the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, all nuclear reactors in Japan came to a halt. Before the accident, emissions from the power sector accounted for 30% of domestic emissions, of which 30% came from nuclear power. For the time being, replacing the portion of energy that would have been produced by nuclear power plants with thermal power generation is unavoidable but that doesn't justify the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, following the accident, the people of Japan have been actively saving energy which has resulted in major reductions in energy consumption. In addition, it is possible to make further reductions in the future with the upgrade to renewable energy. Japan introduced a feed-in-tariff scheme for renewable energy which finally led to an increase in domestic renewable energy usage. If we take a more innovative approach to our power system, we can continue this trend. Even without nuclear power generation in 2020, we will show that through the introduction of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency, significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions is possible by shifting from coal to LNG thermal power plants (see briefing paper).

Reconsider target that do not live up to the world:

Not enough information and data regarding the announced 3.8% reduction target is available publicly. In addition, there is no detailed information of the new financial pledge of 16 billion yen over the next three years. Climate policies require the understanding and cooperation of every citizen. Targets should be made by openly discussing them in a transparent manner. When making future targets, we strongly hope that the Japanese government will resubmit more ambitious, domestic targets and face the challenge of cutting global emissions in half by 2050 thus making the world safe enough for the international community and future generations to survive.

Mie Asaoka, President of Kiko Network

PDF of Press Release:

Japan's new mid-term target is anything but ambitious: A 2020 reduction target of 3.1% compared to 1990 levels (3.8% compared to 2005 levels) (November 15th, 2013, PDF)

<http://www.kiconet.org/english/press/pr20131002en.pdf>

Briefing paper:

Nuclear shut-down does not justify Japan's weak target (November 15th, 2013, PDF)

<http://www.kiconet.org/english/publication/archive/paper20131115.pdf>

Related links:

The Ministry of Environment: Climate change prevention headquarters' handout #27: Greenhouse gas reduction target for COP19 (November 15th, 2013, PDF)

http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/ondanka/kaisai/dai27/siryou1_1.pdf

Kiko Network Press Release: "A 2020 target of '3.8% greenhouse gas emissions reduction compared to 2005 levels' is inadvisable", October 30th, 2013

<http://www.kikonet.org/iken/kokunai/2013-10-30.html>

Kiko Network Press Release "Lowering greenhouse gas emission reduction target is not acceptable", October 2nd, 2013

<http://www.kikonet.org/english/press/2013-10-02.html>

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