

<Press Release>

G7 Hiroshima Summit Concludes

With the world closely watching, G7 still does not break from their dependence on fossil fuels

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On May 20, the G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué, summarizing the outcomes of the G7 Hiroshima Summit held May 19 to 21, 2023, was released ahead of schedule. The G7 Clean Energy Economy Action Plan was also released as a separate statement on the same day.

In the area of climate change and energy, much focus was given ahead of the summit on whether the outcomes from April's G7 Climate, Energy, and Environment Ministers' Meeting (hereinafter referred to as "Environment Ministers' Meeting") held in Sapporo would be further strengthened, and if Japan could present a path to fossil fuel-free energy consistent with the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement. The G7 outcomes will have an effect on the course of discussions at COP28, including negotiations with emerging economies and the Global South, and so the world was calling for an ambitious agreement from the G7 countries.

The G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué reflected much of the contents of the communiqué from the Environment Ministers' Meeting; based on the latest IPCC report, it reiterated the increasing urgency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43% by 2030 and 60% by 2035 compared to 2019 levels. Additionally, quantitative targets for expanding offshore wind and solar power by 2030 were included, along with a commitment to accelerate the phase-out of unabated fossil fuels.

The statement on the use of hydrogen and its derivatives (ammonia) in the power sector was also nearly identical to that of the Environment Ministers' Communiqué, stating only that the G7 "note that some countries are exploring" the use of hydrogen and its derivatives in the power sector with a number of strict conditions (such as a 1.5°C pathway and when consistent with the G7 agreement to decarbonize the power sector by 2035), reaffirming that the Japanese government's promotion of hydrogen and ammonia co-firing for thermal power generation is not approved by the G7 as a decarbonization technology.

On the other hand, G7 leaders were unable to commit to a clear timeline for the phase-out of coal-fired power generation, and no agreement was reached on decarbonizing the power sector beyond "achieving a fully or predominantly decarbonized power sector by 2035". Additionally, regarding public investment in gas, the Leaders' Communiqué was a step backward from the previous month's Environment Ministers' Communiqué; noting the need to promote the transition to clean energy in order to break away from energy dependence on Russia, the Leaders' Communiqué

emphasized the role of LNG, and allowed for publicly supported investment in the gas sector.

A major concern of the Leaders' Summit was nuclear disarmament and security, as well as relations with Russia and China - both because the conference was held in Hiroshima, the site of atomic bombing, and because Ukraine's President Zelensky was able to come in-person to participate in the conference. War creates food and energy crises and hampers countries' climate actions in the short term, increasing global warming. This results in more extreme weather events, creating more refugees and exacerbating humanitarian crises. Additionally, war itself increases CO2 emissions. It is necessary for the world to restore peace and accelerate a more equitable transition from fossil fuels such as coal and gas to renewable energy.

The first Global Stocktake (GST)* is scheduled to be completed at COP28 in December. Based on this assessment, each country will formulate its NDC for 2035, and it is already clear that Japan will be required to set a more ambitious NDC.

At the G7 Hiroshima Summit, overseas NGOs also came to Japan and harshly criticized Japan's fossil fuel policies. Immature technologies like hydrogen-ammonia co-firing and CCUS promoted by Japan are not consistent with the 1.5°C target and are merely measures to extend the life of coal. Nonetheless, Japan's continued provision of public funds to promote these technologies, both domestically and internationally, is seen by the world as problematic. Instead of showing leadership as chair of the G7 summit by working for more ambitious climate change measures, Japan has instead lobbied for the endorsement of these technologies, blocking progress on the G7's climate commitments. It is imperative that the Japanese government understands that the world is watching its climate policies closely, and that it must show a roadmap for a rapid transition to renewable energy and decarbonization that is truly consistent with the 1.5°C target.

* The Global Stocktake is an international system to assess the implementation status (progress) of global warming countermeasures by countries around the world every five years in order to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. The first Global Stocktake after the Paris Agreement is being conducted from 2021 to 2023.

Reference:

G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Summit (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

<Japanese> https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ms/g7hs_s/page1_001673.html

<English> https://www.mofa.go.jp/ms/g7hs_s/page1e_000666.html

(Both the G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué and the G7 Clean Energy and Economy Action Plan are available for viewing.)



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