Global efforts for a better tomorrow

COP26 special

For almost three decades, the U.N. has worked to bring many countries together as possible on a singular basis for the global climate change summit known as COP, short for Conference of the Par- ties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. These events have served to focus the world's attention on climate change more and more each year, increasingly remaining at the center of the urgent need to take the issue as seriously as possible.

This year’s 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference, dubbed COP26, is being held Nov. 1 to 12 in Glasgow, Scotland. Originally scheduled to take place in 2020, but postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, COP26 marks the first official overseas trip of new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who is expected to be among the leaders attending. The leaders meeting is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday.

A dynamic 2021 in Japan

Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, the Japanese government has not rested on the previous efforts to combat climate change. In April 2021, for example, then-Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga officially stated Japan’s commitment to lowering greenhouse gas emissions by 46% from 2013 levels by 2030.

In addition, new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced plans to make COP26 his first official overseas trip as prime minister. The leaders’ meetings are scheduled for Monday and Tuesday.

Another event of this year was the Special Meeting of ADB’s Ministers on Energy and the Environment, held online on June 22. At the time, ADB President Adena Chakrabarti proposed a plan to achieve a climate change transition to more environmentally sound growth. It is characterized by everything from energy change and measures based on the actual needs and conditions of each country to financial support of $100 billion for specific projects, as well as plans for knowledge sharing and improving business environments.

The government has also spent much of the year working on a revision of Japan’s Basic Energy Plan. Of note, Japan aims to have renewable accounts for 26% to 38% of total power generation capacity by 2030, nearly as much as the 38% recorded in fiscal 2020.

One recent event of deep significance for Japan, and emblematic of its attempts to combat climate change, was Tokyo Beyond Zero Week, a combination of eight international conferences on energy and the environment held from Oct. 4 to 8. Reflecting Tokyo’s October 2020 announcement of the goal of “reaching a carbon-neutral, decarbonized society by 2050,” Tokyo Beyond Zero Week represented concrete steps in this direction.

In addition to energy sources and technology, the role of financial mechanisms was an important matter of note during TBZW and one that will only gain in sig- nificance in the years to come. The final conference of this eventful week brought together the leaders of advanced research and development institutes from the G20 nations. Cross-border collaboration among R&D bodies was encouraged to bring about further innovations in numerous fields.

A global effort

In 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden has sought to change the ecological policies of his predecessor Donald Trump, who had pulled America out of the Paris Agreement. Biden is working to strengthen the United States’ commitment to climate action. In his first year in office, the United States announced that it would be doubling its climate finance pledge for developing countries and stated that the world should aim to become carbon neutral by 2050. The new NDRC plans to call for stepped-up action for specific projects, as well as plans for knowledge sharing and improving business environments.

To ensure both growth and carbon neutrality, a need to examine the specific conditions in each nation and economy was stressed. Japan’s progress with the key technology of carbon recycling was demonstrated with the aim of further strengthening international cooperation and making advances in related technology. Another issue was how hydrogen could be used on an equal basis, and ideas for building hydrogen-based societies around the globe were discussed. The long-term outlook for liquefied natural gas (LNG) and how to increase market transparency for this fuel were also brought up, as the energy source has been a promoter of stability and sustainable growth both in Japan and around the world. Ammonia was another zero-emissions fuel that received attention, with an eye to international collaboration and efforts to expand the recognition and use of this energy source.

In addition to energy sources and technology, the role of financial mechanisms was an important matter of note during TBZW. One of the main groups to have a role in this area is the Ministry of the Environment, which is responsible for the Ministry of the Environment, policed by the MEE, as is air quality. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for the Ministry of the Environment, policed by the MEE, as is air quality. Whether or not COP26 achieves its goals will be up to the nations that are attending. Despite the daunting challenges that continue to make climate change an ever more pressing issue, there is a sense that something can be done to make a difference and that action can be taken.

For the Japanese government, the entire planet will be watching closely as COP26 unfolds in the days ahead.

Let’s Move

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Sustainable Development Goals

The Japan Times

Print Edition

November 1, 2021

For those interested in learning more about the COP26 climate summit, the Scottish Exhibition Centre in Glasgow, Scotland, is a great place to start.
Tokyo Beyond Zero Week

Uniting paths to carbon neutrality

In October 2021, Japan pledged to reach complete carbon neutrality by 2050. This unprecedented ambition determined to work toward another target — carbon neutrality by 2050. As such, Japan is taking a lead among major economies in Asia, creating a carbon neutral society.

Japanese companies and governments are working together to set ambitious goals and build solid action plans for cutting greenhouse gas emissions in line with the country’s commitment to the Paris Agreement of reducing the nation’s GHG emissions by 2050.

Part of Japan’s efforts to reduce carbon emissions includes establishing policies and targets to achieve carbon neutrality through hydrocarbon supply chains and policy direction.

Kishimoto is excited about the new potential to realize economic opportunities that arise from global cooperation and the discussions at TBZW. “This is the chance to make contributions to our time, and we must approach it with all our might. As the TCFD secretariat, we’re especially excited,” Kishimoto said. “To achieve our goal of a low-carbon and resilient global economy, we must work together with people from various countries, including developing nations, toward achieving climate neutrality. If we work together, I believe that net-zero emissions can be achieved.”

Japan and the international community need to work together to make global carbon neutrality happen in the shortest possible time to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. As a member of this mission, Japan will actively contribute to the society and economy in Asia, and accelerate its own carbon transition. At TBZW, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) held “Tokyo Beyond Zero Week,” a series of eight international conferences focusing on a variety of important topics related to achieving carbon neutrality, including:

- Asia Green Growth Partnership Ministerial Meeting (10th meeting)
- International Conference on Carbon Recycling (third meeting)
- International Conference on Fuel Ammonia (AGGPM) (UNEP International Conference on Fuel Ammonia)
- International Conference on RD20 for Clean Energy Technologies Leaders’ Group on Hydrogen, Energy Storage and Electrochemical Energy (RD20 conference)
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In addition to the established conferences, TBZW 2021 included a special session for the Asia Green Growth Partnership Ministerial Meeting and the International Conference on RD20 for Clean Energy Technologies Leaders’ Group on Hydrogen, Energy Storage and Electrochemical Energy.

The Asia Green Growth Partnership Ministerial Meeting focused on discussions among policymakers and industry leaders on how to accelerate the transition toward carbon neutrality.

In the private sessions, participants shared their views on the importance of the Paris Agreement and the need to work together toward achieving carbon neutrality.

The participation of TBZW 2021 was expanded to include various new themes, such as hydrogen, energy storage, and electrochemical energy.

The participants discussed building supply chains during private sessions at the fourth Hydrogen Energy Ministerial Meeting.

In October 2021, Japan pledged to reach complete carbon neutrality by 2050. This unprecedented ambition determined to work toward another target — carbon neutrality by 2050. As such, Japan is taking a lead among major economies in Asia, creating a carbon neutral society.

Japanese companies and governments are working together to set ambitious goals and build solid action plans for cutting greenhouse gas emissions in line with the country’s commitment to the Paris Agreement of reducing the nation’s GHG emissions by 2050.

Part of Japan’s efforts to reduce carbon emissions includes establishing policies and targets to achieve carbon neutrality through hydrocarbon supply chains and policy direction.

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