Statement on Policies and Actions
to Increase Resilience to Possible Global Risks of Climate Change and COVID-19
～For the Ministerial Meeting of the Online Platform on Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19～

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Abstract:

The ultimate goal of climate policies and actions is to maximize prevention against climate change damages. In light of the climate crisis and the social changes caused by COVID-19, it is important for countries, international organizations and other stakeholders to strengthen policies and actions, including adaptation measures for the most vulnerable groups, better energy access, employment opportunities, and poverty alleviation to ensure that no one is left behind.

Recommendation 1: Strengthening climate change adaptation measures for the most vulnerable groups

After the spread of COVID-19, damages believed to be caused by climate change, such as major cyclones, have been occurring around the world. Because of the increase in unemployment and poverty caused by COVID-19, there are also concerns about the growing number of vulnerable groups who are most likely to be affected by climate change.

Therefore, it is necessary for countries and international organizations to strengthen climate change adaptation measures and support[1] for the most vulnerable groups[2]. To this end, we should urgently identify and discuss which people have been left out of the rapid social changes caused by COVID-19, how they will be affected by climate change, and what kind of support is needed.

Recommendation 2: Accelerating global reduction for all types and sources of greenhouse gases in a comprehensive and cost-effective manner

The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions due to the reduction of economic activity during COVID-19 is temporary, and there are concerns that the emissions will increase significantly in the process of economic recovery. In order to prevent damage caused by climate change, it is necessary to dramatically reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. For this, we should not forget other types and sources of emissions than energy-derived CO_2 since one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions are composed of CO_2 from Forestry and Other Land Use, fluorocarbons, methane, and so on.

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[1] For example, ensuring access to information and services for those who lack access to the information and services needed to prevent climate change damages, and providing an equal safety net for all, and so on.

[2] The following could be included in the vulnerable groups, for example: women, children, immigrants, indigenous people, those in need, people with disabilities, businesses with weak management capacity, and workers with weak individual rights and positions.

Therefore, <u>all types and sources of greenhouse gas emissions should be targeted for mitigation measures, and cost-effectiveness should be also considered to accelerate domestic mitigation measures.</u> In addition, <u>international cooperation is necessary for the global reduction of all types and sources of greenhouse gases (it is important for countries to utilize their own areas of expertise).</u> Furthermore, <u>to monitor global progress and devote resources to each measure more effectively, we must improve the current statistical systems of countries and provide support for developing countries to strengthen their capacities.</u>

Recommendation 3: Ensuring energy access for vulnerable groups and promoting decentralized renewable energy systems

Reduced incomes caused by COVID-19 could lead an increase in the number of people who have limited energy access. Although it is essential to ensure energy security for hospitals and health facilities to treat patients, many of them are still not electrified and experience unscheduled power outages around the world.

Therefore, <u>it is necessary to strengthen support to secure clean and stable energy access for all. Especially in this time of the COVID-19 crisis, supporting medical facilities to ensure clean and stable energy should be prioritized.</u>

It is also necessary to take measures with the assumption that a global infectious disease like COVID-19 will occur again in the future. If economic activities continue to shrink due to prolonged outbreaks of these diseases, there are concerns that energy supplies from abroad could be insufficient and that domestic and regional supplies could be unstable.

To prepare for the risks mentioned above, <u>the transition from centralized to decentralized renewable energy systems that utilize local resources should be promoted. This is also important for decarbonization and mitigation measures.</u>

Recommendation 4: Pursuing integrated solutions to economic, social, and environmental challenges in the process of economic recovery from COVID-19, considering climate change, environment, sustainability, and disaster resilience

COVID-19 has put many people out of work, and they have sunk into poverty. While a global economic recovery is urgently needed, there are concerns about a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions during the economic recovery process.

Therefore, <u>countries and international organizations should put all their efforts into implementing economic recovery measures that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation measures, and give due consideration to sustainability and disaster resilience. The reskilling of those who have lost their jobs and support for them is also important in addition to creating jobs through green recovery.</u> Furthermore, toward the achievement of the SDGs in 2030, various goals and targets are expected to be achieved simultaneously. <u>In achieving climate change and environment-related goals, it is necessary to consider their impact and contribution to social and economic goals[3].</u>

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[3] For example, poverty alleviation, gender equality, and energy and resource access.