

Zero Carbon City International Forum

Opening Remarks

H.E. Mr. KOIZUMI Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, Japan

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Honorable guests, distinguished partners, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to Zero Carbon City International Forum!

I am KOIZUMI Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment and Minister in charge of Climate Change, Japan.

In opening this Forum, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the organizer.

First of all, thank you very much for your participation in this forum from around the world!

I am grateful to all the speakers and moderators of this Forum from 28 cities and national organizations in 15 countries, and 11 international organizations.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the UNFCCC Secretariat, IGES, ICLEI and the World Bank for their support to this Forum.

We face two global crises: COVID-19 and climate change.

To tackle this extraordinary challenge, all countries need to cooperate and unite. That's why we held the "Ministerial Meeting of the Online Platform" last September with UNFCCC.

The participating countries shared their actions for green recovery from the COVID-19 and agreed that "redesigning our socio-economic systems" is important.

The key to achieving that is three transitions: to decarbonized society, to circular economy and to decentralized society.

We also reconfirmed that the policy and action of local governments are crucial because of their direct link to citizens' daily life and activities.

Based on that idea, Japan is promoting decarbonized society from the ground up, starting with cities.

The number of Japanese "Zero Carbon Cities," or local governments committing to zero carbon emissions by 2050, has now reached 320, covering more than 100 million people.

To accelerate such a movement, the Japanese Government launched the Council for National and Local Decarbonization in last December.

There, our focus will be on developing leading local models for decarbonization during the next five to ten years, because that is a crucial period for us to achieve the 2050 goal.

And by spreading those models to other regions, we hope to trigger a "decarbonization domino effect" around the country.

And our ambition does not stop in Japan.

We want to see the "decarbonization domino effect" spreading to the world.

So we will continue supporting cities' initiatives through our city-to-city collaboration program.

The program has already linked 39 cities in the world with 15 Japanese cities including Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kita-kyushu.

And to further accelerate cities' movement towards decarbonization, we decided to hold this Zero Carbon City International Forum together with the UNFCCC Secretariat which is promoting the "Race To Zero Campaign."

Let us all share policy and actions of cities leading the movement and learn from each other's experience.

And let us hope that this Forum will trigger a global "decarbonization domino effect".