

A New Stage

Framework for Climate Change and its Global Challenges

- **Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15 to COP 21)** -

Profile

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Horie is a 1969 graduate of the School of Economics, Osaka University. He earned Master of Economics from Tulane University, U.S.A in 1971. He graduated from the School of Law, Osaka University in 1973. He studied at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) in France from 1975 to 1976.

Horie joined the Economic Integration Division, Economic Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1973. In 1983, he served as Special Assistant to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Under Secretary General of the United Nations.

In 1989, he served as Director in charge of the OECD Affairs, Economic Affairs Bureau.

He served as Counsellor of the Embassy of Japan in Denmark in 1990 and as Minister of the Embassy of Japan in Kenya in 1992.

He served as Director in charge of JICA in 1995 and as Director of the Aid Policy Division, Economic Cooperation Bureau in 1996. In 1998, he served as Minister of the Embassy of Japan in France.

In 2002, he served as Director General for International Affairs for the Defense Minister. He was also the Chairman of the Tokyo Defense Forum, inviting Asian countries' counterparts.

He served as Ambassador to the State of Qatar from 2004 to 2007 and as Ambassador to Malaysia from 2007 to 2011. In 2011, he was appointed as Ambassador for Global Environmental Affairs and served as Chairperson of the Council Meeting of the Organization of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTO) in 2012.

In April 2012, he started to work at Meiji University as Specially Appointed Professor at the Organization for the Strategic Coordination of Research and Intellectual Properties.

In 2013, he was elected as Councillor of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Also in 2013, he was appointed as member of the Advisory Board for "Sustainable Energy for All" (SE4All), a global initiative co-led by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the World Bank.

Today he is also working as Special Assistant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and attends Conferences on Climate Change, Biodiversity, Disaster Risk Reduction, etc.

The COP 20 in Lima was concluded at the end of last year with the adoption of the “Lima Call for Climate Action” after debates on the new international framework on climate change.

The writer, who attended the Conference, looks back on the history of COPs since COP 15 in Copenhagen and offers his insights towards COP 21 which will be held in Paris in December this year. He also explains about Japan’s contribution to developing countries tackling problems of climate change.

- **The Failure of COP 15 in Copenhagen and the Resuscitation of Trust at COP 16 in Cancun**

The center of the debates of COP 15, which was held in Copenhagen in December 2009, was how to decide on greenhouse gas (GHG) emission targets beyond 2013, aiming to reduce global GHG emission by 50%, and for developed countries as a whole by 80% by the year 2050.

Of the 190 participating countries, leaders from 98 countries - including U.S. President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, and Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama - were in attendance. Heated debates took place based on the understanding that the rise in global temperature must be kept below 2 degrees Celsius compared with the years before the industrial age of the late 19th century.

In the end, although the “Copenhagen Accord” was drafted to realize numerical emission targets for the year 2020, it was only “taken note of” and the Conference resulted in a failure with no concrete agreement.

One year after this failure, at COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, an agreement was reached after hours of overnight negotiations to “anchor” the emission reduction targets to be submitted in accordance with the “Copenhagen Accord” by both developed and developing countries. By coming to terms with the Cancun Agreements, the once ruined COP negotiation process was resuscitated and finally able to earn trust.

- **Declaration of Japanese Position on Kyoto Protocol**

At COP16, Japan declared that she does not commit herself to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. This became a highlight of the COP 16. Minister of Environment, Mr. Ryu Matsumoto emphasized that although Japan maintains the spirit the Kyoto Protocol, the Protocol would not be able to cope with climate change because it covers only 27% of global emissions and that a new framework needs to be established based on the Copenhagen Accord which covers 80% or more of the global emissions.

Because of this declaration, Japan not only received the dishonorable “Fossil of the Day” award, but also she faced a barrage of criticism and she was accused as “Japan is killing the Kyoto Protocol which was her own baby”.

● **Durban Platform**

However, this Japanese position expressed at the COP 16 had become the foundation of the Durban Platform which was included in the “Durban Agreements”. The Agreements were reached in Durban, South Africa at the last minute after a long huddle among USA, China, India, EU, Japan and others.

The Durban Platform states to the effect that a protocol, another legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force which is applicable to all Parties should be adopted at COP 21 in 2015.

In fact, how to establish a new international framework based on the Durban Platform became the center of debates in the Conferences that followed, namely COP 18 in Doha, COP 19 in Warsaw and COP 20 in Lima.

● **Lima Call for Climate Action**

The “Lima Call for Climate Action” adopted at COP 19 in Lima includes ① determination of the information to be included in each country’s “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” (INDC) which includes GHG emission targets that each country believes achievable ; ② the INDC’s are to be submitted where possible by the end of March, 2015 ; ③ a negotiating text on a new international framework, which would include elements described in the Durban Agreements such as mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, transparency of action and support, and capacity building, should be made available before May 2015 ; and ④ negotiations are to be carried out in an aim to adopt the new framework at COP 21 in Paris to be held in this December 2015.

In fact the Kyoto Protocol required only developed countries to reduce GHG emissions. This new framework, in contrast, is epoch making in the sense that it requires all Parties, including developing countries, to submit their INDC’s which would include their target figures for GHG emissions.

● **The US-China Agreement at the margin of APEC Summit**

At the margin of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit, which was held in Beijing last November, U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping announced measures to tackle climate change. The United States will reduce by the year 2025 GHG emissions by 26% to 28% compared with the figures in 2005 and China will peak out its total GHG emissions by the year 2030.

When Obama attended COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009 with the intention of reaching an agreement, he was unsuccessful because of the persistent opposition by China, which was frowned upon by many countries. This complete change of Chinese position announced last November was just amazing.

For one thing, Obama wanted, by making this US-China agreement, to overcome his bitter disappointment at COP 15 in Copenhagen. Also at home, a violent hurricane assaulted a wide area all the way from the Deep South up to New York and caused a serious power outage afflicting eight million households and also brought about 8 trillion yen worth of damage. In addition, a wildfire recorded as the worst fire in decades roared in the mountains in California, which was caused by high temperatures and dry weather, and over 6,000 firefighters made a desperate attempt to put out the fire.

For President Xi Jinping, air pollution had entered a critical state in China and was causing serious health damage such as PM2.5. In order to produce an “APEC Blue”, even temporarily, seven measures needed to be carried out in a thoroughgoing way including completely halting operations at steel mills and cement factories located within a 200 km radius of Beijing and reducing the amount of traffic by half in the central areas of Beijing by controlling in-coming vehicles based on the number plates.

At any rate, it is a very good news that China and the United States - the top two countries in the world in CO2 emissions with the share of 26.9% and 16.6% respectively – will be both engaged in serious efforts to deal with climate change, especially when we consider that the two countries, not under legal restraints of the Kyoto Protocol, are to participate in a new international framework.

● Japan's Response

In preparation for COP 21 in Paris, the Japanese government is aiming to submit its GHG emission target beyond 2020 as early as possible. In late December last year, discussions were started on what Japan's energy mix should be, on which Japanese GHG emission reduction target for the next term will be based. The Japanese government is expected to set the target figures as high as possible. The final figures, however, will depend on the outcomes of the discussions on such issues as the rate of operation of nuclear power plants and the percentage of renewable energy. Therefore, we cannot predict any conclusions at this point.

On the other hand, with respect to the need for having all Parties engage in efforts to deal with climate change, providing technological and financial support for developing countries making efforts to deal with climate change will be vitally important.

Japan has placed a strong emphasis on the “Fast Start Finance” which was established during the COP15 in Copenhagen and has implemented as many as 1,023 projects in 118 countries around the world between 2010 and 2012, contributing 17.4 billion US dollars from both private and public sectors.

Through such efforts, Japan has served as the world's leading donor country. Japan supported mitigation projects to reduce GHG emissions in developing countries such as solar power

generation, geothermal power generation, wind power generation, construction of power transmission lines, etc. As to adaptation projects, Japan supported developing countries' projects such as formulation of policies to enhance capabilities to make countries better prepared for natural disasters, supply of safe water to deal with droughts and desertification. Japanese support also extends to projects for the protection of forests in developing countries.

Even after the end of "Fast Start Finance" in 2012, Japan has been continuing her assistance for developing countries' efforts to tackle climate change with an accelerated pace than during the "Fast Start Finance". Developing countries have expressed their deep gratitude for such Japanese efforts.

Furthermore, with respect to the Green Climate Fund which was agreed upon at COP 16 in Cancun in order to promote measures against global warming in developing countries, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at the G20 Summit held in Brisbane last November, pledged Japanese contribution as much as 1.5 billion dollars subject to the approved by the Diet. Combined with the 3 billion dollars pledged by the United States, the target amount of 10 billion dollars was reached at COP 20 in Lima, which helped build trust between developed and developing countries.

Furthermore, Japan established a new market mechanism named "Joint Crediting Mechanism" by which she supports developing countries' projects jointly to reduce GHG emissions and so far MOUs have been signed with 12 countries including Indonesia, Mongolia and the whole process entered into the stage of concrete project implementation.

Japan which experienced two oil crises during the 1970s has developed innovative technology realizing a most energy efficient economy in the world and established various systems and programs for the enhancement of energy efficiency.

Also by participating in "Sustainable Energy for All" (SE4ALL), a global initiative led by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Japan decided to make contributions to enhance global energy efficiency by offering developing countries various measures and programs based on her experiences.

Thus Prime Minister Abe announced during the UN Climate Summit held last September that Japan would contribute to help reduce global GHG emissions by setting up an International Energy Efficiency Improvement Hub in Tokyo.

● Conclusion

Climate change is a crucial and pressing global issue that affects the survival of the human being. All countries, both developed and developing ones, and every citizen of the world must cooperate to tackle and overcome this climate change. Japan is the one that proposed to formulate a new international framework on climate change. She needs to exert a great deal of

effort into restoration from the disaster caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and to come up with an optimum energy mix. It is really a crucial moment for Japan.

However, amidst of these challenges, I strongly feel that Japan should receive a due recognition for all her efforts supporting developing countries to implement measures against global warming and also for her efforts trying to work hard to enhance global energy efficiency as well.

Photograph 1: Horie explaining the importance of enhancing global energy efficiency at a SE4All side event during COP 20 in Lima.

Photograph 2: Peruvian Minister of Environment speaking at the Opening Ceremony of COP 20 in Lima.