

Japan's new climate goal far short of what science and global equity requires



Today the Government of Japan (GoJ) officially tabled a draft climate target to an expert panel with domestic greenhouse gas emissions cut by 26 per cent¹ in 2030 from the 2013 level. This translates into a 17% reduction² compared to the 1990 level, far short of what science requires to keep the temperature rise below 1.5 degrees³ within this century. It clearly fails to meet Japan's international responsibility as it is the fifth largest in annual GHG emissions and sixth in total since the Industrial Revolution⁴.

Japan's draft target will be finalized by the time of the G7 summit in Germany in June where Premier Abe intends to make the announcement. This is part of the five-year-long UN negotiation slated to conclude in December in Paris to set up a new international agreement that will define actions taken by each country after 2020 to tackle climate change.

According to plans previously submitted to the UN by each nation, scientists warn possible temperature increase could reach more than three degrees (Celsius) from today with catastrophic impacts upon human and natural habitats. The latest three decades have seen more than doubling the number of weather-related disasters worldwide with over three fourth of losses of human lives occurring in vulnerable developing countries⁵.

The draft plan should address:

- Ambitious renewable energy and energy saving policies⁶ by ensuring priority grid connection for renewable energy suppliers under the current feed-in-tariff scheme, strengthening grid capacities and introducing additional energy efficiency measures;
- Refrain from the use of coal power⁷. Recently announced plans to build new coal PP equals to a 10% increase of Japan's emissions from the 1990 level⁸. Latest coal power stations still emit carbon dioxide twice more than natural gas.
- Refrain from nuclear power⁹. Fukushima disaster in 2011 is far from over. Government's flawed risk assessments against earthquake/volcanic activities, inadequate evacuation planning and a lack of long-term radioactive waste management plan amongst others are enough reasons to move to nuclear phase-out.

FoE Japan believes that setting an ambitious national climate goal is possible through boosting energy savings and renewable energies and without nuclear power, shifting from heavily centralized current energy systems towards community-based localized energy sources.

¹ 1.042 billion CO₂e tons in 2030. Energy-related CO₂ emission cut by -21.9%, HCFC/HFC -1.5% and LULUCF -2.6. Additional offsets overseas of max 0.1 billion tons not included.

² Weaker than the EU's plan to cut 40% domestic emissions by 2030, and the United States plan to reduce emissions by -26-28% below its 2005 level by 2025.

³ The goal demanded by 54 African nations, 48 least developing countries and 44 small island states (group membership overwraps)

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/apr/21/countries-responsible-climate-change>

⁵ Munich Re etc.

⁶ The GoJ plan indicates RE 22-24% and energy saving by 17% of electricity supply by 2030. Researches suggest further potentials.

⁷ about 26% of electricity supplied by coal thermal generation according to the GoJ 2030 plan.

⁸ <http://www.kiconet.org/eng/press-release-en/2015-04-10/Japan-2030-climate-target/>

⁹ The plan includes 20-22% of electricity supply from nuclear power, which requires extending reactor life beyond 40 years, replacement and adding new reactors/replacements.