

# **Declaration of Climate Emergency**

## **by Local Governments of Korea**

Humanity is currently facing a climate crisis. Scientists warn that failure to limit the average temperature rise through this century to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels will lead to irreversible damage to both the earth and humanity.

Ample warning evidence is appearing in every corner of the world. Typhoons and hurricanes are growing stronger and more frequent. The severity of annually recurring heat and cold waves, droughts, and floods are difficult to predict. At the same time, large-scale wildfire incidents like the one in Australia frequently occur across the globe. The increase in outbreaks of zoonosis like COVID-19 that jeopardize all of humanity is closely linked with the climate crisis. These are a consequence of development-centered economic growth policies and are threatening the sustainability of our society. Those threats, in particular, have dealt a much heavier blow on the socially and economically vulnerable.

In an attempt to halt the current crisis and deter the average temperature from increasing any more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, scientists from across the world strongly urge attaining Carbon Neutrality (Net-Zero) by the year 2050. Though the worldwide community has agreed on the global targets through the Paris Agreement, we have already witnessed a rise of one degree Celsius over the past 100 years. We face a great urgency to halve greenhouse gas emissions relative to 2010 within the next decade. To respond to this problem, governments, lawmakers, businesses, and citizens need to work together. It is time for us to take prompt and proactive climate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

More than 86 percent of Korea's greenhouse gas emissions originate in the energy sector. Existing government-led centralized energy systems are not the answer to dealing with the climate crisis. A grand transition from the existing energy systems, combined with multi-faceted efforts from localities, buildings, and transportation systems to waste management, must be put in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is the fundamental way to address the climate crisis and the new path to a sustainable society.

As we have witnessed during the COVID-19 crisis, local governments are the ones who move first in response to climate crises and disasters. It is also local governments that implement adaptive action plans for those vulnerable to climate disaster. Local governments, together with citizens, shall take the initiative to set targets for greenhouse gas reduction and to establish and implement responsive plans to protect the vulnerable.

The national government and National Assembly should declare their commitment to Carbon Neutrality 2050 without any further delay and, based on concerted efforts by all members of our society, initiate policies of a grand transition. At the time of this new transition, each party should take on the role befitting its responsibilities and maintain respect for fairness and justice so that the vulnerable shall not bear the brunt of the suffering. Local governments shall not spare any efforts toward realizing a righteous transition and a sustainable society. In addition, local governments shall do our part in our localities to ensure that the marginalized are not pushed even further toward the edge of our community and that the new transition shall not lead to any new forms of inequality.

As we confirm that overcoming the climate crisis and assuring a better and sustainable future are the top priorities that lie ahead of us,

we declare the following:

1. We declare that this is a time of climate emergency.
2. We set the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to maintain a global temperature increase of less than 1.5 degrees Celsius and work proactively towards that goal.
3. We urge the national government and National Assembly to promptly proclaim a state of climate emergency and declare their commitment to Carbon Neutrality 2050.
4. We shall expand the use of renewable energies to respond to the climate crisis, establish plans for attaining energy independence, and work for their phased implementation.
5. In partnership with our citizens, we shall arrange an effective institutional system to overcome the crisis of sustainability and operate it responsibly.

June 5th, 2020

Province or  
City

Town, County  
or District

Position

Name

Signature

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