

Statement by H.E. Ms. Kim, Eunkyung
Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea
to the High-level Segment of the 23rd Conference of the Parties
to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Mr. President,

Your Excellency Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The unprecedented early entry into force of the Paris Agreement is a clear testament to the aspirations and support for the new era of climate action. This transition toward low-carbon society is irreversible, a clear calling for all of us, and the only way forward.

Korea is also in the midst of high aspirations for change.

The new Korean Administration, born of the candlelight revolution by its people, declared its vision of “people-centered economy.” This vision includes consideration for the present and future generations, and this is the reason we are taking the path toward green economy and sustainable development.

As you may be aware, in less than half a century, Korea achieved industrialization and is now a full-fledged democracy. Now in this era of climate change, Korea is on a new mission: To transition into a low-carbon society as a model for the world, so that climate change no longer remains a threat, but an opportunity to leap forward.

Mr. President,

The mission has already begun. Korea is in the process of re-inventing its climate and energy policies. Recognizing that 87% of Korea's greenhouse gas emissions come from the energy sector, we are making transition toward cleaner and safer energy system. This includes an early shutdown of old coal-fired power plants, boosting the share of renewables to 20% by 2030, and gradual move away from nuclear power.

In addition, we will take full advantage of our nationwide emissions trading scheme. It is the first of its kind to be established in Asia, and this will help us regulate more than two thirds of our national greenhouse gas emissions.

All these diverse efforts will be put together into our 2030 roadmap in coming years, as our solemn pledge to fulfill our emissions reduction target.

Moreover, Korea is placing greater efforts on adaptation measures, as they directly affect people's livelihoods. We are currently in the process of implementing our second national adaptation plan against ever-increasing risks and disasters from floods, droughts, and typhoons that are exacerbated by climate change. This plan mainly aims to prevent any climate change-related damages to the most vulnerable populations.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The new climate regime based on the Paris Agreement should be a platform to encourage individual countries to participate in this global endeavor. That is why it is important to increase transparency on all the climate actions and to respect the diversity of NDCs prepared according to each country's respective capacity and circumstances.

This I believe is the “Bula Spirit” and the heart of “Talanoa Dialogue” – no finger-pointing, but a spirit of embrace and understanding.

Korea will also fully engage in preparing and adopting the Paris Agreement rulebook that is based on mutual trust.

Once again, I reassure you that Korea is strongly determined to implement the Paris Agreement, and the people of Korea will also do our part to fulfill our commitments.

Thank you.