

Suggestions From Japan for Post-Kyoto

Protocol Framework

by SUZUKI Keisuke

Only about a year ago, one of the most pressing global issues was soaring crude oil prices. This makes me realize the transient and fast-changing nature of the economic trends. In the face of soaring crude oil prices, such alternate solutions as biomass energy or energy-saving technology attracted much attention, and so did countermeasures against global warming in the world. Now, in contrast, with energy prices standing stable and a sense of crisis on the wane, environmental issues at large seem to be slightly losing worldwide attention.

But the year 2009 should mark a momentous milestone towards forging a post-Kyoto Protocol framework to address global warming, which will come into effect from 2013. The success of measures against global warming hinges on how far the greenhouse gas emission could be reduced. And, the international community has almost reached a consensus on the total required amount of emission cuts in order to control the certain level of global warming. Besides, it has agreed on the need to achieve an amount of reduction calculated on world's spare economic capacity. Thus far, it was the language of science. But here comes in politics, where each country is firmly committed to the pursuit of out-and-out national interests, over the question of allocating to each responsibility of reduction. The discussion over when to set emission baseline or whether reduction is calculated by total amount or basic Unit for Energy is not the language of science but simply that of politics.

While Japan is duly required further to reduce its emission as a country with the highest level of energy efficiency in the world, more importantly, it is in a position to launch a scientific approach more positively and offer scientifically feasible and realistic models for reducing greenhouse gas emission. As far as developing countries are concerned, from my own experience, it is important to be so careful and realistic as to prepare different bases for calculation of reduction targets, respectively for the industrial and transportation sectors, which can be rather sassily controlled by government control and allows for scientific calculation, and for the private sector, which is easily influenced by individual decision maker.

In this connection, I have been trying to convince the Japanese government on such occasions as meetings of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Japan that it is apparently unscientific to entrust each government to work out its own medium-term goal of reduction by using its own standard of calculation, and thus it is necessary to apply the same global standard of calculation to each country to formulate a medium-term goal including at least that of reduction potential. Instead of locking horns with other countries over the reduction targets estimated in each

country behind closed doors, it is required of Japan now to convince the international community of a need to examine what kind of model is most scientific. As for the industrial sector, sufficient knowledge has been accumulated through such framework as Asia-Pacific Partnership for Clean Development and Climate (APP). Japan should communicate those ideas above to the world before it is too late. Upon having fixed the reduction potential of each country through scientific approach based on scientific data, we should discuss who should bear the cost of the technology required; manufacturers which developed the technology, developed countries or developing countries as beneficiaries.

Here is an idea. As it is not fair that a developer should bear the cost of transfer and licensing of technology, and in order not to discourage development incentives or future innovation, it is preferable that the technology transfer should be conducted on a commercial basis with due respect for intellectual property rights. And in cases of developing countries except emerging ones, the costs required for it are to be born by developed countries through funds when necessary. What do you think of this?

(This is the English translation of an article written by Mr. SUZUKI Keisuke, Member of the House of Representatives (LDP), which originally appeared on the BBS “Giron-Hyakushutsu” of GFJ on February 4, 2009.)