News Release

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Green initiatives the way forward for Asia

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South Korea is drafting a five-year development plan to create green industries and nearly one million jobs and China is allocating 40% of its stimulus package to environment-related projects. Add to this a trilateral partnership between South Korea, China and Japan to lead low-carbon green growth and it's a recipe for growth across the region.

"We believe that a strong economy and a clean environment are not mutually exclusive, and that Korea has to take an active part in tackling climate change, " Han Seung-Soo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, told 350 participants from 35 countries at the 18th World Economic Forum on East Asia today. " Korea recognizes the symbiotic relationship between economic growth and environmental sustainability. "

The country has proclaimed low-carbon green growth as its new national vision. " In a nutshell, low-carbon green growth aims to shift the current development paradigm from the fossil-fuel dependent, quantity-oriented growth to a new paradigm of qualitative growth which uses less energy and is more compatible with environmental sustainability. "

In the short term, South Korea has adopted a " Green New Deal " policy to tackle the global economic crisis, a combination of neo-classical supply-side economic policy aimed at creating jobs and revitalizing the economy. For the longer term, Korea will be spending roughly US$ 40 billion over the next four years, which will create 960,000 jobs. A new five-year development plan focused on low-carbon green growth is being finalized, which is perhaps the first of its kind in the world.

" Since the 1960s, Korea has been very successful in industrial development, which was led by five-year industrial plans, " said Kim Hyung-Kook, Chairman, Presidential Committee on Green Growth, Republic of Korea. " We will follow the same model, but under a new and completely new paradigm of low-carbon green growth. In early July this year, we will be seeing the early draft, which will be reported to the president. "

China is also counting on environmental initiatives for future economic growth as well, said Victor L. L. Chu, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, First Eastern Investment Group, Hong Kong SAR. " In terms of energy intensity, which is the amount of energy required to generate one unit of GDP, China has dropped 75% over the last 20 years and is still looking very aggressively to achieve more efficiency. Nearly 40% of China ' s 4 trillion renminbi stimulus package is green project related. " He added that " China, Korea and Japan can work together to find some win-win solutions for us in the region and on a global basis. "

Tarek Sultan Al Essa, Chairman and Managing Director, Agility, Kuwait, said the Middle East also has a green vision. " When the government of Abu Dhabi, one of the most well-endowed petroleum-based economies, announces that it ' s turning to nuclear power and building a carbon-neutral city from scratch, everybody needs to take a step back and realize the enormity of what that is saying, " he said. His company, which provides logistics and supply chain services, is increasingly getting questions from customers about green programmes. " The next logical step is that [environmental initiatives] will be more and more incorporated into our customers ' decision-making processes. "

Information technology can help accelerate the greening of Asian growth, said Chiaki Ito, Vice-Chairman, Fujitsu, Japan, pointing out that computers can help consumers measure and visualize their energy consumption and carbon emissions in real time and thus do something about them. " But to fundamentally solve global warming, we need not only to advance technology but also to change our mind with a new world view, " he said. " We need to

change our life and business styles and not only seek material wealth. ”

“ Typically, in other downturns, environmental issues had been put aside, ” noted Robert Greenhill, Managing Director and Chief Business Officer of the World Economic Forum. “ That does not seem to be the case with this downturn. Obviously key policy issues – not only in terms of international commitments but also in pricing and fiscal incentives – are key elements, and it appears that governments from China, Korea and Japan are playing a key part in that. ” The corporate sector is also strongly committed and engaged, he said. “ This is an opportunity to make even more efficient the market for the exchange of best practices, not only in terms of technologies, but also in terms of know-how and the application of these technologies across different sectors. ”

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