

Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific

Turning resource constraints and the climate crisis
into economic growth opportunities



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Foreword



The Asia-Pacific region stands at an important crossroads: high levels of economic growth have lifted great numbers of people out of poverty, and many of our development goals are now within reach. The region cannot realize this promise, however, by following the conventional growth strategies in the context of new challenges and uncertainties.

The days of abundant resources and falling prices are over. Resource constraints, price volatility and the climate crisis have removed business as usual as an option and require a serious re-examination of resource- and carbon-intensive growth strategies. If our region is to sustain the high economic growth that we need to achieve our development goals, then we must shift to a different growth trajectory.

Regionally, we must improve resource efficiency and urgently set in motion a new economy in which improving efficiencies and investing in natural capital become the drivers of economic growth.

Green growth can help us to achieve these goals by turning crises into opportunities and by promoting the development of an inclusive and sustainable Asia-Pacific region. Since green growth was adopted as a regional sustainable development strategy in 2005, at the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED-5), many governments have recognized its potential and have taken important steps towards greening their economies.

Realizing the promise of green growth requires a bold and ambitious transformation of economic systems. The very structure of economies, ranging from governance and fiscal policies to lifestyles and infrastructure, has to be reshaped. This Roadmap provides policymakers in the region with a comprehensive list of policy options and practical implementing strategies to consider adopting, based on their own national priorities and circumstances. In particular, the unique and innovative aspects of the Republic of Korea's green growth strategy offer a valuable reference to other countries in the region.

Green growth can be effective only if pursued collectively. The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) provides an exceptional opportunity to forge these necessary global partnerships. The countries of Asia and the Pacific should lead this process by generating the regional momentum necessary to move towards a green economy capable of lifting people out of poverty and achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, flowing letters.

Noeleen Heyzer

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Executive Secretary of ESCAP

A message from the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Green Growth of the Republic of Korea



The concept of 'low carbon green growth' as a nation's new development paradigm was first presented to the world by President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea in his speech on 15 August, 2008, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Republic. It was arrived at by President Lee as his government's final answer, after months of discussion with his advisors since his inauguration, to the nation's 10-year-old question of how Korea could continue the developmental success of the earlier era amidst the adverse trends at home and abroad of the new century. By proposing low carbon green growth for Korea which had come only halfway towards a rich developed country, he was boldly proposing, as he elaborated in his subsequent remarks, an active pursuit of greenhouse gas reduction and environmental protection for sustainable growth and continued development, and to exploit green technologies and clean energies, in particular, as new growth engines and as a source of new jobs. The message was clear – that greening meant innovation and this would drive growth. Particularly remarkable, and even stunning, was his commitment as the head of a state to climate change mitigation, as well as his focus on green innovation for renewed growth.

The Korean government has been pursuing green growth in a comprehensive and vigorous way since then. I find a good coverage of the subsequent evolution of Korea's green growth policies in this Roadmap in various illustrative pieces. I thank the authors for this. I should only add here that green innovation has begun to flourish and green business dynamism as well as green lifestyles have begun to take root in Korea by now, although, admittedly, far more have to be done. In parallel to those domestic efforts, the Korean government has also been pursuing the goal of promoting green growth as a global agenda, especially, as a new development strategy to be shared by the emerging and developing economies. It launched the East Asia Climate Partnership initiative as well as the Global Green Growth Institute. It was successful in promoting the green growth strategy as a new core agenda for the OECD. As the host for the G20 Summit held in November 2009, it managed to push green growth into the summit agenda. It has launched the Global Green Growth Summit. It has just now opened a Green Technology Center for international green technology cooperation, and in particular, for cooperation with the developing countries.

The Korean government is proud that its such international efforts have been instrumental in popularizing green growth as an attractive new strategy in an increasing number of emerging and developing countries. In this way, Korea is engaged in the international effort to open a new chapter in the history of the human civilization - a chapter for a planet-responsible new civilization.

The Korean government was pleased to sponsor this Roadmap as part of this effort. It consists of a comprehensive set of uniquely thoughtful and practical prescriptions for green growth for the countries both in and out of Asia and the Pacific. I am happy to report that the strategy so well elaborated by this Roadmap is fully supportive of Korea's National Green Growth Development Strategy. I hope that all the governments in the ESCAP region will find the policies and advices offered by this Roadmap agreeable and implementable, and also that the Roadmap will inspire those governments to cooperate to create an enabling environment for green growth in the region. The government of the Republic of Korea, and its Presidential Committee on Green Growth, in particular, are willing and ready to offer assistance to fellow regional countries for their respective green growth, as well as to play a leading role in regional cooperation for green growth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Soogil Young', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Soogil Young, Ph.D.

Chairman

Presidential Committee on Green Growth
Republic of Korea

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The lead authors were: Rae Kwon Chung, Lorenzo Santucci, Makiko Koriyama, Eunyoung Lee, Hyunju Lee, Seungwon Chung, Maki Sato, Joohee Jung, Shunquan Zhu, Pimjai Hoontrakul, Alan J. Chin and Yoko Monoe.

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