



## **East Asian Countries (CJK) Cooperation in Climate Mitigation: Necessity and Opportunity**

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### **I Background**

Slowing global warming is among the most complex economic, political and diplomatic challenges of our time. Cutting greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal, petroleum, and other traditional fossil fuels will require innovational policies and hard work by governments in East Asia, not only in economically stagnated Japan, but also in rapidly developing countries like South Korea and China. When it comes to energy consumption and energy dependency, however, few countries outrank China, along with Japan, and Korea. Thus, there are great challenges in addressing the problem with the economically and politically-feasible strategies for combating global climate disruption that enhance economic growth, employment opportunities and overall quality of life in CJK (China-Japan- Korea).

### **II Why CJK need cooperation?**

In response to the circumstances we mention before, CJK have adopted the ambitious targets for reducing its dependence on energy imports and its carbon emissions simultaneously. In particular, China, the world leading carbon emitter, already makes it clear to cut the carbon intensity by 40 percent to 45 percent by 2020 from the 2005 level, and non-fossil fuel taking up around 15% in the basic energy consumption. Japan pledges to reduce its GHGs emission 3.8% cut at the 2005 level by 2020, with the highly ambitious zero nuclear plan goal. Meanwhile, South Korea has the plan for cutting its energy intensity by nearly half by 2030. It also called for reducing the dependence on imported fossil fuels by more than one-quarter over the same time period.

Based on the objective assessment, the achievement of CJK's climate commitments will be less likely if no more renewable energy successfully takes up the room left by the phasing out of traditional one in the near future. In South Korea and China, the fossil fuel component's energy mix would be replaced primarily by nuclear power and, secondarily, by new and renewable sources of energy. While in Japan, the renewable could be the only alternative.

Actually, China who is consuming huge amount of energy in its heavy producing industry is eager to decrease its energy dependency. South Korea and Japan, unlike China, possess almost no indigenous fossil fuel resources. Thus, there are both pressure and dynamics which could push

forward to the CJK's cooperation on the each phase of non-traditional energy: the R&D, the production, the commercialization, and the implementation.

### **III What could CJK do?**

On a different perspective, fulfilling their climate mitigation commitments provides a really good opportunity for CJK initiating the cooperation. As we know, high politics faced a really tough situation recently. The nationalism arguments and territorial disputes, and the historical hatred, among other obstacles, have made the CJK cooperation hopeless and more complicated. According to the functionalism, the collaboration in the low politics and its over-spill effect could be an approach to thwart that stalemate, one way or another.

CJK could do a lot to promote that cooperation based on sound division and development. With the financial supports and tax leverages, the CJK governments need to provide the platform, encouraging the transnational enterprises to participate division and commercialization, fostering the institutes and universities to take part in the new energy research and development in the section like the new energy automobiles, the new energy battery, CCS technologies. And more important, in a sense, the traditional energy is the kind of energy which induces zero-sum competition among countries. The non-traditional energy, especially the renewable one (including the wind power, solar power) could not. No country could keep others from using the renewable energy. Taking this opportunity and transforming the energy sources could move the traditional zero-sum game into the non-zero-sum one.

### **IV Conclusion**

Firstly, CJK could not cut the GHGs emission meaningfully without the cooperation in the non-traditional energy level.

Secondly, due to the issues like nationalism, territory disputes, the high politics cannot move ahead. Low politics could be taken as the alternative approach towards CJK cooperation.

Thirdly, unlike traditional energy, non-traditional energy, especially the renewable energy, will bring the non zero-sum game instead the zero-sum one.

More important, the CJK cooperation during the energy transformation will encourage China's peaceful rise. China's recent seemingly a seeming assertiveness is a kind of defensive, not offensive, response to make sure that energy sources and venues China really needs are accessible, accountable, and affordable.

To sum up, in combating climate change, China, Japan and Korea have to adopt ambitious targets for reducing its dependence on energy imports and its carbon emissions simultaneously. However, the energy transformation from the traditional to the renewable one could declare a new page of East Asian cooperation and development.