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**General Debate**

**Getting to Zero: Mobilizing Parliaments to Act on Climate Change**

*Delivered by Park Byeong-seug,  
Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea*

Honorable fellow Speakers and delegates!

I am Park Byeong-seug, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

At the outset, I'd like to express my deep gratitude to the IPU and Speaker Puan Maharani for bringing together parliamentary delegations from around the world despite difficult circumstances caused by the pandemic.

Bali, a place often called a paradise on earth, reminds us of the true beauty of the planet Earth. This beautiful planet, however, is in pain. Heatwaves strike the frozen land of Siberia, while snowstorms rage in scorching hot deserts. Extreme weather events, such as torrential rain, heavy snowfall, and severe heat and cold, are threatening us, regardless of time and place. Korea is no exception. Recent wildfires have caused massive destruction in the mountains along the eastern coast.

It is fortunate that the international community adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015 to save our precious planet. As of 2022, a total of 138 countries have committed to carbon neutrality.

What matters is to act on our commitment. If we fail to act today, there is no tomorrow for our planet and ourselves.

Honorable delegates!

Parliaments should be at the forefront of net zero initiatives around the world. Today, I'd like to take this opportunity to make a few proposals and share the efforts of the Korean National Assembly to reduce its carbon footprint.

First, we should be a leader for climate action.

It is not the future of the Earth but the very present that is threatened by the climate crisis. Parliaments should be committed to setting and achieving reduction targets and take the lead.

In 2020, the Korean National Assembly adopted a resolution calling for emergency response to the climate crisis to join global efforts to reach net zero.

Last year, we passed the Framework Act on Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth to put into legislation the government's carbon neutrality vision and implementation plan. Based on this, the government announced its enhanced NDC target at COP26 last November. The revised target is to cut emissions by 40% below 2018 levels by 2030, an increase of 14% from the initial target of 26.3%.

The National Assembly itself has jumped on the green bandwagon, undertaking new initiatives to be more environmentally friendly by 2030. By accelerating digitalization, we are transitioning to an entirely paperless parliament. We are also switching to green options for the fleet of official vehicles running on the premises of the National Assembly. In addition, efforts are underway to use more efficient and environmentally friendly products.

Second, we should be a guardian of a just transition.

The climate crisis hits the most vulnerable first and hardest. Parliaments should take the lead to protect disadvantaged populations from the risks presented by the transition to a carbon-neutral society.

The Korean National Assembly has set a “just transition” as a guiding principle for our climate action to share burdens incurred in the transition to a greener economy.

Under the principle, the government will support vulnerable groups and communities through social safety net programs and special designation for assistance. These are part of the efforts to address economic, environmental and social inequalities created in the transition to a carbon-neutral society.

Third, we should be a facilitator of green industries.

New technologies and industries are integral to the transition to a decarbonized economy. Parliaments should serve as a facilitator to support businesses shifting to environmentally friendly and green industries so that they can take a leap forward through new technologies and industries.

In cooperation with the government, the National Assembly laid the foundation for the government’s Green New Deal policy to support companies to move into cutting-edge industries as they go through the process of shifting to eco-friendly and low-carbon systems.

The National Assembly adopted laws and institutions to support the Green New Deal policy, which includes energy transition and promotion of green industries.

The establishment of the Climate Crisis Response Fund will help us secure funding to promote the transition to a carbon-neutral society and green growth.

Distinguished delegates!

Countries tend to put environmental concerns on the back burner when they encounter economic uncertainty or instability in politics and security. However, if we fail to address the climate crisis, we cannot maintain stability not only in our economy but also in politics and security.

The very survival of mankind and the future of our planet depend on how we respond to the climate crisis.

We cannot drag our feet any longer. It is time for us to act to get to net zero. Let us save the Earth. Let us act now.

Thank you for your kind attention.