

Achieving Net Zero: Policy Implications for U.S.-Japan Cooperation

Virtual Panel Discussion

February 16, 2022 | 7:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. ET
February 17, 2022 | 9:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m. JST

Leading up to the 26th United Nations' Conference of the Parties (COP26), both Japan and the United States laid out ambitious goals to achieve net zero for their respective economies. Notably, Japan is taking substantial steps to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years, with a plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The United States has been a longtime partner of Japan and is recently recommitted to the Paris Agreement, with President Biden striving for a carbon free power sector by 2035 and a net zero emissions economy by 2050. In this discussion, we aim to analyze these goals in both countries through three distinguishable, but nevertheless interconnected, sectors: industrial infrastructure, transportation, and electricity. Decarbonization of a nation is a tremendous feat, and these three sectors will require a range of policy mechanisms to make the successful transition to net-zero. As two of the largest emitters in the world, Japan and the United States have significant challenges to address over the next three decades. However, this also presents a range of opportunities for both countries to increase collaboration through research, investment, and knowledge sharing.

Wednesday, February 16, 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

7:00 p.m.–7:05 p.m. Welcome and Introduction

Ashley JOHNSON
The National Bureau of Asian Research

7:05 p.m.–7:15 p.m. Framing Keynote Remarks

Naoko ISHII
Center for Global Commons; Institute for Future Initiatives

7:15 p.m.–7:55 p.m. “Achieving Net Zero: Policy Implications for U.S.-Japan Cooperation”

Moderator: Tom LUTKEN
The National Bureau of Asian Research

Discussants: Clare RICHARDSON-BARLOW
University of Leeds

Mika OHBAYASHI
Renewable Energy Institute

Mikiko KAINUMA
National Institute for Environmental Studies

7:55 p.m.–8:00 p.m. Closing Remarks

Chihiro AITA
The National Bureau of Asian Research

Speaker Biographies

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Naoko ISHII – *Center for Global Commons; Institute for Future Initiatives*

Dr. Naoko Ishii joined the University of Tokyo on August 1st, 2020 as Professor, Executive Vice President, and inaugurating Director for the Center for Global Commons, whose mission is to catalyze systems change so that humans can achieve sustainable development within planetary boundaries. The Center aims at playing a much more active role in mobilizing movements of multi-stakeholders towards a shared goal of nurturing stewardship of the Global Commons. Prior to joining the university, she served the GEF (Global Environment Facility) as CEO and Chairperson from 2012 to 2020. She formed GEF’s first mid-term strategy, GEF 2020, with a strong focus on transformation of key economic systems. She joined the Ministry of Finance, Japan, in 1981 and served as Deputy Vice Minister of Finance, Japan for 2010-2012. She also worked at the IMF and the World Bank. She obtained a BA in economics and a Ph.D. in international studies, both from the University of Tokyo.

MODERATOR

Tom LUTKEN – *The National Bureau of Asian Research*

Mr. Thomas Lutken is a project manager with the Energy and Environmental Affairs group at NBR. Prior to joining NBR, Mr. Lutken spent six months working at the Center for Strategic and International Studies for their US-India Policy Studies section and a year working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a hydrologic technician. Mr. Lutken earned an undergraduate degree in environmental science from Brown University in 2014 and a master’s degree in environmental management from Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment in 2019, concentrating in environmental economics and policy.

Chihiro AITA – *The National Bureau of Asian Research*

Ms. Chihiro Aita is a Project Associate with the Energy and Environmental Affairs team at NBR. Prior to joining the Energy and Environmental Affairs team, Ms. Aita was a Gorton Leaders Fellow at NBR’s Slade Gorton Policy Center. She also has research and administrative experience from working at the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle. Ms. Aita has a BA in Political Science and International Studies from Macalester College.

Ashley JOHNSON – *The National Bureau of Asian Research*

Ms. Ashley Johnson is Senior Director for the Energy and Environmental Affairs group at NBR. In this role, she manages and oversees NBR's initiatives on energy security, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Prior to joining NBR, she interned in the Consular Section of the Consulate General of the United States in Shanghai, China. Ms. Johnson received her MA from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, with concentrations in international economics and energy, resources, and the environment. She also holds a graduate certificate in Chinese-American Studies from the Hopkins-Nanjing Center and a BA in International Studies from Southwestern University. Ms. Johnson received the Critical Language Scholarship to study Mandarin and attended Hamilton College's intensive language program, Associated Colleges in China.

Mikiko KAINUMA – *National Institute for Environmental Studies*

Dr. Mikiko Kainuma is Senior Research Advisor of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Secretary General of International Research Network for Leveraging a Carbon neutral Society Research Network (LCS-RNet) and Visiting Researcher at the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES). Since 1990, she has developed Asia-Pacific Integrated Model (AIM) and assessed policy options for stabilizing the global climate with researchers across Asia, such as those in China, India, Korea, and Thailand. She is a Lead Author of IPCC Fourth and Fifth Assessment Reports, and Special Report on 1.5 degrees, and a Coordinating Lead Author of UNEP Global Environment Outlook 6 (GEO-6). Dr. Kainuma received her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in applied mathematics and physics from Kyoto University, Japan.

Mika OHBAYASHI – *Renewable Energy Institute*

Ms. Mika Ohbayashi is Director at Renewable Energy Institute. Before joining the Institute, she worked for International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) as Policy and Project Regional Manager for Asia Oceania, in Abu Dhabi, from May 2010 to Aug 2011. She is one of two founders of Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies (ISEP) and served as Deputy Director for 8 years since its establishment in 2000. She also worked for UKFCO at the British Embassy to Japan, as Advisor for Climate Change Projects and Policies. She started her career in the energy fields by joining the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center in 1992.

Clare RICHARDSON-BARLOW – *University of Leeds*

Dr. Clare Richardson-Barlow is a Research Fellow at the University of Leeds where she examines industrial decarbonisation from a political economy perspective and teaches on Asia-Pacific political economy topics. Prior to joining the University of Leeds, Dr. Richardson-Barlow worked for many years at internationally focused policy research organisations in Washington, D.C., including the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) and the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS). Dr. Richardson-Barlow holds a PhD in sustainability research and East Asian studies from the University of Leeds. She has an MA in International Development and Public Policy from Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, and she holds a BA in Politics and Chinese from Pacific University in Oregon, USA.