



South Korea: Long Way to Go

On December 30, 2020, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) submitted its updated NDC to the UNFCCC.

South Korea's NDC did not enhance its mitigation target. Although it advances in presenting the target as a 24.4% reduction below 2017 emission levels (709.1 MtCO₂eq, excluding LULUCF), while the previous NDC used a business as usual (BAU) scenario, both targets lead to the same emission level of 540 MtCO₂eq, according to CAT (2021). The NDC presents information on adaptation plans as well as on public participation and lacks detailed information on financing for the NDC beyond the Green New Deal.

As South Korea is one of the world's major emitters, a High-Income country and one of the economic models that many developing countries refer to, we conclude that the updated NDC has a **Long Way to Go** to become the NDC We Want.

Advances

Adaptation: The NDC informs that the 3rd National Climate Change Adaptation Plan for 2021-2025 was laid out in 2020 and that for its design, a national climate change risk assessment was conducted in 2019. In July 2020, the 2020 Korea's Climate Change Assessment Report, a comprehensive survey on the impact of climate change and vulnerabilities in such sectors as water management, ecosystem, health, and agriculture and fishery, was published. The assessment and research results served as a basis to define implementation measures to enhance climate resilience across all sectors. The Korea Adaptation Center for Climate Change and global events on adaptation are also mentioned. The Korean government made adaptation planning a legal obligation of municipal and local governments in 2012 and 2015, respectively. Accordingly, 17 municipal governments and 226 local governments have established and implemented their own adaptation measures.

Tracking Process: The 2020 NDC progresses by presenting more information on governance and transparency related to the national system to track implementation, mentioning that all Ministries can report their reduction data to the Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Research Center of Korea (GIR). More certainty in implementing and achieving the national GHG reduction target is expected to be established from 2020 onwards.

Gaps

Mitigation: South Korea did not enhance its ambition, although it is stated that the government will further raise its ambition level for its 2030 target. The President has also announced that they will enhance the NDC within his term. The updated target is to reduce 24.4% from the total national GHG emissions in 2017, which is equivalent to 709.1 MtCO₂eq (excluding LULUCF), by 2030. An analysis by CAT (2021) concludes that both the 2015 and the 2020 targets lead to an emissions level of 540 MtCO₂e by 2030. The target also includes an increased share of domestic reduction but no details are provided.

Finance: A total cost for the implementation of the NDC is not mentioned. The NDC brings a figure for the implementation of the Green New Deal project, "an additional countermeasure to accelerate actions for its implementation". It also mentions that the Republic of Korea has been operating a series of international programs to support developing countries' capacity-building for adaptation. The NDC lacks details on sectoral quantitative targets, stronger alignment with SDGs and outcomes from international financial support.

WWF's NDC rating grades	WWF checklist for South Korea's 2020 NDC assessment
 NDC We Want	 Mitigation
 Short Way to Go	 Adaptation
 Some Way to Go	 Finance
 Long Way to Go	 Fostering system change
 NDC We Don't Want	 Inclusiveness and Participation
	 Contribution to Sustainable Development
	 Tracking progress
	South Korea's rating grade after assessment:  Long Way to Go

For more information

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