

**Public Seminar:**  
**The Futures of Low-Carbon Society:**  
**An Asia-Pacific Vision Beyond 2050**

**Welcoming Address and Project Introduction**

**By**

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(Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning. I would like to welcome all of you to the opening ceremony of “**Public Seminar: The Futures of Low-Carbon Society: An Asia-Pacific Vision Beyond 2050**”

This morning, it brings me great pleasure to introduce the result of the first ever broad-based technology foresight for low-carbon society in Asia-Pacific. This seminar brings together futurists, sociologists, scientists, industrialists, policy makers and the general public to take our common challenges to the next step: paving the way to the most preferable and plausible future.

This seminar is the climax of an international project titled **Research on the Futures of Low-Carbon Society: Climate Change and Strategies for Economies in APEC Beyond 2050**. The APEC Center for Technology Foresight proposed the project to the *APEC Industrial Science and Technology Working Group* and was accepted as Thailand’s self-funded project with generous funding from the Royal Thai Government. The project is also co-sponsored by many APEC economies; Hong Kong, China; Japan; the People's Republic of China; Viet Nam; Philippines; Brunei Darussalam; Chinese Taipei; United States; and the Republic of Korea. The purpose of this project was to create many visions of the future society where low-carbon economy and adaptive lifestyle will become the principal drivers governing trade and development. In terms of methods used, we conducted Real-Time Delphi survey globally to do forecasting in some key perspectives, and created Scenarios for the Asia-Pacific region that illustrate social, economical and political demand. Based on this clearer understanding of what lies await in the future, we discussed the whole range of science, technology, and innovation that respond to such demand.

The research explored 5 different perspectives of low-carbon society in the future up to and beyond 2050 in 5 perspectives;

1. Climate change and its direct impacts,
2. Migration, rural life and natural resources,

3. Society and health,
4. Trade of goods and services
5. Housing, construction, urban life and transportation.

The Delphi forecasts and Scenarios created frameworks of both technological and non-technological solutions within that picture of the future. We then used a technique called *Backcasting* to estimate milestones for development pathways and means for technology transfer. The Scenario creators pointed out that for their vision to be realized, significant challenges had to be overcome in many aspects of the future such as public sector leadership, multilateral cooperation, technological advancement, public education toward new lifestyles and carbon accounting.

Scenarios, however, are not something that can materialize without realistic and implementable strategies either to support the preferred futures or, on the other hand, to avoid the unfavorable outcomes.

To take on the task of shifting to a low-carbon society, quick actions must be taken to lay the groundwork for the long-term transformation ahead. At the **national level** each of us, APEC economies should focus on

1. Establishing a national entity on climate impacts and environmental sustainability, entrusted with the task of developing, monitoring, and overseeing the implementation of government policy related to human-environment relations. As a pre-condition, each member economies should develop national policies in consort with local communities to ensure strong local support for their implementation.
2. Market mechanism such as a carbon pricing system must be developed domestically. Financial and fiscal incentives to encourage investments in low-carbon technologies need to be established. Programs should endeavor to mobilize the private sector and academic researchers to work cooperatively to boost green technology development.
3. Special attention must be paid to low-carbon energy policies. A fundamental shift in energy planning must occur that makes low-carbon strategies the priority. Technology transfers, in particular, should help accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels in both the power and transportation sectors.
4. In order to ensure the emission reduction in country and benchmarking the *Emission Inventory* should be implemented in all cities with the collaboration from public and private.
5. Clean Development Mechanism (or CDM) should be adopted to any project design processes as an incentive for both public and private projects. Investments must be made in public outreach campaigns to consistently reinforce public sector leadership for the low-carbon transition.
6. Public education systems must be infused with a low-carbon ideology. This must occur at all grade levels and across all disciplines. Immediate attention should be given to increase the number of climate scientists and support for more accurate climate forecasting systems. Appropriate investments in information technologies should occur to facilitate the growth and transmission of the low-carbon society knowledge base.

None of the above will be of any value unless there is strong will on the part of decision makers, and effective enforcement and monitoring by the implementers, to ensure policies are adhered to.

**On APEC Regional Level the main focus should be on**

1. Devising a roadmap with clear objectives on the steps the region should take to transition to low- carbon societies. APEC should encourage and support national development plans that incorporate international climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into it.
2. Establish the international certification on green industries and support investment strategies that encourage compliance. Regional strategies for cooperation should be made in such areas as combating airborne pollution, trading in low-carbon products, enhancing public awareness, strengthening law enforcement and promoting environmentally sustainable practices.
3. Advancing public education toward low-carbon societies by supporting regional knowledge sharing and exchanges through communications and networking among APEC members. Low-carbon cities could be a good place to start and participation could be recruited from private sector actors that are furthering the low-carbon society transition.
4. Establish an APEC task force for Climate Change for enhancing the North-South and South-South collaboration among the member economies.

Embarking on the 2050 low-carbon society is neither technologically nor economically daunting. It is, however, socially challenging. Political will must be mobilized to put in place policies that can unite regulations and market forces with a commitment to more environmentally benign and healthier lifestyles in the Asia-Pacific as a whole.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize those who have supported this project. My gratitude to the speaker and panelists who provide invaluable contributions to this public seminar. This will enhance our commitment to the international community and the common challenges of low-carbon global society in the years to come.

Let me express my appreciation to our co-organizers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization, and Sasin Institute for Global Affairs, for their consistent support.

My special thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Foreign Missions Integrated Project (FMIP) funding without which this project could not have happened.

I wish the public seminar a great success.

Thank you.