



Ban Ki-moon President of the Assembly and Chair of the Council

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY AND CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

Dear Friends and Members of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI),

Two thousand nineteen was a critical year for the international community to take action on climate change, to demonstrate it is possible to decarbonize the economy, and to ensure that we can maintain a high standard of living in an inclusive economy that leaves no one behind. Climate impacts—such as hurricanes, floods and wildfires—are becoming an increasingly urgent reality. As many events have shown, climate change affects people everywhere, and it is the greatest challenge facing humankind. Without global action, millions of people will live in poverty and unhealthy environments, triggering increased risks of conflict and instability.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water

supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with the global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C.” In order to achieve the commitments of the 2015 Paris Agreement to keep the global temperature rise well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, we must act now. Governments and businesses have an important role to play in mobilizing political will and financial resources, both of which are so urgently required for countries’ mitigation and adaptation actions. No country, either developed or developing, is immune to the effects of climate change, as we saw with the forest fires in Australia, the United States and elsewhere.

In 2019, public awareness of climate change has finally turned a corner. The young Swedish climate activist Greta



Thunberg, who became known globally for her environmental campaign, has attracted millions of youths and adults to take part in global climate strikes around the world. Thunberg has managed to mobilize her own generation to stand up and demand “climate action now” and shame adults, parents and world leaders into the same.

Last year, Europe stepped up as the largest bloc of countries committed to the net-zero target. The European Union showed commitment to achieving an ambitious climate policy and released its EU Green Deal with the aim of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. EU countries, including France and the United Kingdom, have set the target of climate neutrality in law. Many countries, including Members of GGGI, are stepping up efforts to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and one of GGGI’s priorities is focusing on supporting its Members to meet their ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) commitments.

In 2019, the Government of the Republic of Korea passed emergency measures to tackle air pollution after record pollution levels hit the country. In March, I accepted President Moon Jae-in’s request to head the National Council on Climate and Air Quality (NCCA) to combat fine dust air pollution, which has become a major health concern in Korea. The Korean government advocated for the United Nations to designate an “International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies” as a day to raise awareness about air pollution around the world, as well as to strengthen international cooperation and efforts to reduce pollution. GGGI helped launch the Campaign for Blue Skies & NetZero 2050 in the Republic of Korea with a number of partners to raise public awareness of air pollution and climate change in the country and to build public support for the Korean government to announce a net-zero emissions target by 2050.

The Institute welcomed seven (7) new Members in 2019, namely Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Angola and Ecuador, as well as the first regional organization to join GGGI – the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). We expect to reach a membership of forty (40) or more in 2020, with many on the path of accession including Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire and the European Union. Furthermore, GGGI now enjoys privileges and immunities as an international organization in twelve (12) countries, and the Institute is negotiating such a host country agreement with another sixteen (16) countries.

It was with great pleasure that I accepted to serve a second term as President of the Assembly and Chair of the Council during this critical time when we need to take urgent measures to tackle the climate emergency and meet our target of carbon neutrality by 2050.

Let me assure you that GGGI is committed to working with our Members to support the acceleration of their green growth transition and implement their NDCs. The Institute will continue to be a pioneer in promoting green growth and its benefits to the world, and it will be at the forefront of addressing the climate emergency for our future generations. In doing so, I look forward to a continued partnership to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).