

Opening Remarks

Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Application of Waste-to-Energy in Asian
Region

2018.2.22-23

Novotel Ambassador Hotel Busan, Korea

Distinguished Participants,
Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

I am very honored to deliver opening remarks on behalf of the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development.

I would like to welcome all participants for their keen interest and enormous efforts to make this meeting possible.

At the outset, I would like to thank co-organizers of this meeting. My special thanks goes to Professor Jong In Dong, President of Korea Association of Energy, Climate Change and Environment and his team. I also would like to thank Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea for their support. (I believe Mr. Dae Jung Ki is here, would you like to stand up? Thanks for coming out of your busy schedule.)

I am thankful to Mr. Young-Mok Kim, former president of KOICA, for the congratulatory remarks. I am sure that your message will set the tone for further discussion on international cooperation in this field. Last but not the least, I would like to thank Busan Metropolitan City and Busan Tourism Organization for their generous hospitality.

As some of you may be not familiar with my organization, UNOSD. Allow me to give you a brief introduction. UNOSD was established in 2012 to assist Member Countries' transition toward sustainable development through knowledge sharing, capacity development, and partnership building. We are part of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDESA, but we are located in Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea.

I think you're more experienced and knowledgeable than myself on the topic of Waste-to-Energy. So my remarks will be very short. I just would like to highlight the huge potential of waste-to-energy in the achievement of SDGs and Paris Agreement, which are the most important international achievement which will set the transformative path up to 2030 and beyond.

In many countries, waste management is one of the biggest challenges. Unproperly managed waste cause air pollution, water and soil contamination, consequently threatening human health and damaging agriculture production.

Also, as many countries face great challenges in securing sustainable and reliable energy source.

In addition to this, since the Paris Agreement went into force in 2016, reducing greenhouse gas emissions has become another important mission for all. In their Nationally Determined Contribution, many countries already set their greenhouse gas reduction targets and invest a lot of money in installing renewable energy facilities.

For example, the Republic of Korea also set the target of reducing 37% of greenhouse gas emissions compared to BAU by 2030. In order to do this, the Korean government recently set the Renewable Energy 3020 plan. In a nutshell, Korea needs to expand renewable energy portion in the energy mix from 7% to 20% by 2030.

Waste-to-Energy can be a powerful tool for achieving many goals at the same time. It can contribute to greenhouse gas reduction. It will help to manage waste properly for enhancing quality of life. It can provide reliable, feasible, and sustainable energy access.

However, there are many challenges in applying this innovative approach. It's easier said than done. We need more advanced technology. We need the way to better engage citizens. We need better public-private partnership.

I worked for the Korean Ministry of Environment for twenty years before I joined the United Nations. I remember that waste management is a most difficult sector in the ministry and waste-to-energy is even more difficult part inside of waste management as it needs to address diverse views of stakeholders as well as linkages among various sectors.

In this sense, we are lucky to hear from DG Geun Hee Lee of Busan Metropolitan City. I've heard that Busan set a very ambitious plan to provide 30% share of renewable energy by 2030. Also, since ocean dumping was prohibited, the city

needs to find a better way to deal with waste problems. Waste-to-Energy is a kind of killing two birds in one stone. I hope we can learn more about how Busan Metropolitan City is doing through DG's speech as well as the technical visit tomorrow.

Today and tomorrow, we will listen to a diverse group of experts, government officials, academia, as well as private sectors. 10 countries will present on their country cases in this afternoon. I am sure we will have a clear view on the current status and challenges in applying waste-to-energy and how this can contribute to the achievement of SDGs and Paris agreement through this meeting. Therefore, I would like to ask all of you to share your experiences and insights, to expand your professional network, and to come up with suggestions on future cooperation opportunities.

Before closing, I would like to introduce staffs of UNOSD and Korea Association of Energy, Climate Change and Environment. UNOSD staff, would you stand up?

KAECE staff, would you stand up? Let's give them a big applause.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the presenters, facilitators, and participants. I will look forward to active discussion and a fruitful outcome. Thank you.