

Who Pledges Net Zero: Pioneers and Laggards

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ABSTRACT

The world has agreed on the necessity for urgent and more aggressive actions to combat climate change and set various climate targets and policies. Achieving net zero carbon emissions or carbon neutrality by a specific target year emerged as a new form of climate target. As of September 2022, 136 countries, including the European Union (EU), approximately 70% of 197 parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), have announced or are discussing net zero targets. Although the number of governments pledging net zero has sharply increased since the late 2010s, the announcement of net zero targets at the national level dates back to 2007. However, despite the recent popularity, not all countries are supportive of setting their net zero targets. While eight countries announced net zero targets before the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015, 119 countries have not yet officially pledged net zero targets. Considering that all countries' participation is required to meet the global climate target, it needs to look at which countries are lagging in the global climate efforts and why they are so. With this background, this study examines 1) the global diffusion trends and status of net zero pledges; and 2) factors that might impact the country's net zero pledge.

Keywords: Net zero, Carbon neutrality, Greenhouse gas reduction, Climate Change