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The Timely Meaning of the P4G Summit:  
A Milestone Collectively Moving Beyond  
Individual Action Plans

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## **The Timely Meaning of the P4G Summit: A Milestone Collectively Moving Beyond Individual Action Plans**

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The “2021 P4G Seoul Summit” held in Seoul on May 30 and 31, ended with the adoption of the “Seoul Declaration” calling for “concrete action to meet ambitious climate commitments.” The meeting was the first multilateral environmental Summit hosted by the Republic of Korea. World leaders, including high level officials from 47 countries and 21 heads of international organizations, participated in the Summit and produced meaningful results.

The first major achievement was the official declaration of climate issues as an urgent global security agenda that threatens not only the environment, but also the economy, society, security, and human rights. In that regard, it is significant that the declaration reaffirmed the necessity of a collective response to climate challenges.

Secondly, the Summit attempted to usher in a paradigm shift in the existing developmental model, which is associated with green growth, and presented “Growth through Green” as an alternative model. As presented in this P4G meeting, South Korea proclaimed its willingness to drive innovation in relevant technologies and to lead changes.

Thirdly, the Summit foreshadowed a transition to a new paradigm of green growth. Toward that end, it proposed the new possibility of “Growth through Green” to replace the existing paradigms of “Green after Growth” or “Green with Growth.”

Fourthly, it called for “change through coexistence.” As climate change cannot be addressed by a single government, this year’s P4G Summit served as a bridge between climate-developed and climate-developing countries and was a symbol of global governance beyond national sovereignty and borders.

Notably, the P4G Summit also demonstrated that the South Korean and United States governments share common values and directions on global issues, following the South Korea-U.S. summit held in May. The scope of the South Korea-U.S. alliance, which had previously been limited to dealing with traditional security issues, has now expanded from "strategic cooperation" to "value cooperation" in order to collectively respond to non-traditional global security threats.

Ultimately, climate change must be viewed from the perspective of security, not simply just as an environmental problem per se. Building on the positive outcomes of the P4G Summit, South Korea should actively and proactively move for a competitive leadership role in the Paris Agreement system. To that end, the government of Korea should firmly establish its “green leadership” in the

international community, along with strengthening its contributions, including support for developing nations. Furthermore, economically speaking, the strategic utility of the Summit was the creation of momentum for not only the prevention of economic damage, but also the creation of a new growth driver. This is a rare opportunity to merge South Korea's cutting-edge technology with diplomatic leadership and advance to the status of a developed country.

The hosting of the 2021 P4G Seoul Summit became an important turning point for realizing South Korea's strategy and intention of taking a leading role in resolving the climate change problem. This will be further accelerated if South Korea is able to host the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the UN Climate Change Conference in 2023.

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