

Coalition of Asian Energy Think Tanks Joint Statement

Uniting for Asia's Renewable Energy Future

Message to the Asia Zero Emission Community Summit

8 December 2023

In 2023, Southeast Asian nations experienced record-breaking temperatures, severe cyclones and devastating floods, underlining the urgency of the climate crisis that we face as a region. While a transition to a sustainable energy system is needed, Southeast Asia faces a unique challenge due to its robust economic growth and a projected three to sixfold increase in electricity demand by 2050¹. Now is our window of opportunity to make decisions that will impact the current and next generations as we shift away from the fossil fuel-based systems of the past.

Studies from the IEA and IRENA confirm that Southeast Asia possesses abundant, proven, and cost-effective renewable energy potential². Harnessing this potential can not only substantially reduce CO₂ emissions but also combat air pollution, stabilize energy prices, enhance domestic energy self-sufficiency, and boost employment opportunities.

What is needed now is a shared vision for Asia's renewable energy future, followed by the transformation of energy policies and power systems within each nation.

Despite the vast renewable potential, some governments and companies are advocating for unproven technologies that maintain reliance on fossil fuels, such as ammonia co-firing with coal and thermal power generation with CCS, as paths to decarbonization³. While these technologies are called “clean” or “innovative”, they raise concerns over whether the planet can achieve the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target, and many experts have serious doubts over cost-effectiveness, technological readiness, environmental impact, and lifecycle emissions⁴. The implementation of these high-cost, unproven technologies could in fact adversely affect the sustainability of power systems, climate goals, and energy security.

As a coalition of policy think-tanks in our respective countries, we are united by our well-founded conviction in the immense potential of renewables and their pivotal role in shaping the future. The proliferation of misleading information about the weak potential of renewable energy in the region, often originating from those advocating for fossil pathway solutions, only serves to divide and weaken the sustainable economic potential of the region.

As Tokyo plays host to the Asia Zero Emission Community Summit, we are proud to announce a coalition of energy transition think-tanks working on sustainable energy policy development across Asia. Together, we are committed to providing fact-based, data-driven information and analysis advocating for the region's energy transition, paving the way for a sustainable future.

Signed by

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Financial Futures Center (FFC)

Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC)

Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR)

NEXT group

Renewable Energy Institute

(in alphabetical order)

¹ International Energy Agency "World Energy Outlook 2022" October 2022; International Renewable Energy Agency "ASEAN Renewable Energy Outlook: Toward a Regional Energy Transformation, 2nd Edition " September 2022; and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia & Institute of Energy Economics, Japan, Decarbonization of ASEAN Energy Systems: Optimum Technology Selection Model Analysis up to 2060 (July 2022).

² International Energy Agency "World Energy Outlook 2022" October 2022; International Renewable Energy Agency "ASEAN Renewable Energy Outlook: Toward a Regional Energy Transformation, 2nd Edition " September 2022 among other publications, which state that 80-90% of the region's power supply in 2050 will come from renewables.

³ Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Subcommittee on Petroleum and Natural Gas, Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Fuels (13th meeting), Document 3: "Direction of Oil and Natural Gas Policies for the Years 2030/2050 (Draft)" (February 15, 2021), etc.

⁴ Japan's Strategic Energy Plan plans to co-fire 20% of ammonia in the 2030s, but this will still emit twice the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of natural gas-fired plants. On CCS, only two small-scale plants have been realized in the world during the last 40 years (Global CCS Institute "GLOBAL STATUS OF CCS 2022", October 2022). The capture and storage rate of these plants has only been 60-70% of the CO₂ emitted (Renewable Energy Institute "Bottlenecks and Risks of CCS Thermal Power Policy in Japan", April 2022, Only summary is available in English). Also see IEEFA "Proposed CCS projects need careful review for cost, technology risks" May 2023) . Without subsidies, renewables in Southeast Asia are already competitive with fossil fuel-fired power without CCS, and in some cases cheaper (BloombergNEF "Levelized Cost of Electricity 2022 2H", December 2022).