



## **Asia Pacific CSO Statement: Energy Decarbonisation and Universal Access**

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My name is Syed Jahangir Hasan Masum. I am the Executive Director of Coastal Development Partnership (CDP), a national Research and advocacy focused not-for-profit organization in Bangladesh. I am also the Chairperson of the Reality of Aid Asia-Pacific. I am very active in the national and international development processes to promote climate justice, low-carbon development, just energy transition, energy cooperation and 100% renewable energy.

Asia-Pacific region is currently not on track to achieve all the targets of SDG 7. Around 63 million people in the region will not have access to electricity and 1.6 billion people will keep on cooking with traditional biomass by 2030. In the region, women and children are spending many hours per week for collecting and carrying traditional biomass. For renewable energy, the region is not on the right track. Every subregion in Asia-Pacific needs to accelerate progress for renewable energy consumption. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), renewables will need to supply 70 to 85 per cent of electricity in 2050 if we are to achieve the 1.5°C pathway.

The “Energy decarbonization and universal access” is the fourth entry point of the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). The report has highlighted that access to energy and decarbonization are critical to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals. The Report claims that science must play a major role in advancing sustainable development but lacks critical exploration to provide appropriate scientific definition about modern energy, clean fuels and cleaner fossil-fuel technology. Fossil fuel industry funded propaganda and strong lobbying are undermining energy decarbonization using the absence of politically adopted definition on modern energy.

Lack of political will or government efforts to replace fossil fuel (oil, coal and gas) by renewable energy sources is the key barrier for achieving most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, governments are encouraging fossil fuel use and benefitting fossil fuel companies by providing fossil fuel subsidy for political advantage. The total (direct & indirect) global public subsidies for fossil fuels (5 trillion dollars per year) is 25 times higher than the global public subsidies for renewables (200 billion dollars per year). Government expenditure on fossil fuel subsidies exceeds public spending on education or health in many Asian countries. Many Asian countries are even selling coal technology and expertise to developing countries, although they are phasing out coal fired plants in their own countries. Fossil fuel subsidies are a key obstacle to greater investment in renewables.

The rapid energy decarbonization, which is essential for meeting both the SDGs and the Paris Agreement targets; requires long-term planning with well-designed policies. Without replacing fossil fuel by renewable energy sources, the energy decarbonization (reducing the energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) is quite impossible. Power systems need to be designed to allow for high renewable energy penetration rates, and digital technologies can be deployed to improve the energy efficiency. Large hydro projects should not be pursued as clean and renewable energy due to their social and environmental impacts.

The key recommendations for “energy decarbonization and universal access” are as follows:

1. Phase out direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 in developed countries and by 2030 in developing countries. Each country should formulate an energy subsidy reform policy for phase out. The funds used as subsidies should be reoriented towards affordable renewable energy for the poor.
  2. Phase out fossil-based power generation by 2050, targeting coal power plants first.
  3. Rapid scale-up of decentralized renewable energy solutions for increasing access to decarbonized energy through community ownership and energy justice approach.
  4. Making renewable electric cooking solutions a top political priority
  5. Scale up investments in energy efficiency across all sectors of the economy
  6. Some Asian economies are the new champions of nuclear and hydro energy which they are pushing in the name of sustainable energy. This should be stopped because it not only endangers human and environmental health but also creates lockdown of critical resources for years to come
  7. The energy transition needs careful planning with regard to livelihoods of millions of workers in the fossil fuel industry.
  8. Nuclear energy and large scale hydro-power projects should not be promoted as clean energy.
  9. Education, advocacy and social mobilization are important tools in influencing Individual and collective practices for decarbonization rather than using expensive technocratic geo-engineering solutions like CCS.
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