

Towards an Asian Platform on Transforming Energy Systems*

Based on Asian Conference on Energy and
Asian Climate Justice Assembly Discussions

A. The Right to Energy

1. We believe in peoples' right to energy to be able meet their basic needs and the realization of their basic human rights—right to a life of dignity and well-being, the rights to food and water, to livelihoods, to education, health, housing, the right to safety and security, the right to reproductive justice, the equal treatment and non-discrimination, the right to information, to the right to political participation and civil and political liberties among others
2. The right to energy goes hand in hand with the right of communities and people—women and men—to democratic stewardship and management of the commons, of energy systems, regardless of geographic location and without prejudice to class, caste, ethnicity/ race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity expressions. Religion, age, being differently-abled.
3. The state has the duty and obligation to its citizens to ensure the fulfillment of the right to energy.
4. The right to energy should be realized in a just and sustainable manner that is compatible with the limits of the planet, the environment and ecosystems.
5. The right to energy must be exercised in a manner that recognizes and upholds energy sources are part of the “commons” which should not be owned and controlled by a few nor used and abused for private gain and accumulation of private profit.

B. The Transformation of Energy Systems

1. The transformation of energy systems is part of broader struggles to transform social, economic, political and cultural systems at the local, national, regional and global levels.
2. The transformation of energy systems is a very urgent agenda of peoples movements in view of the following:

- a. Peoples Access to Energy –

Billions of people around the world, the majority of them in Asia, suffer the harsh realities of having no or little access to energy. The lack of access is not only a question of the quality of life but of survival. Energy production and consumption is exponentially increasing but there has been no proportionate increase of people's access to energy. Elites and corporations are the main beneficiaries of energy systems – fuelling their drive for accumulation of wealth, and economic and political power. Peoples lack of access to energy are further exacerbated by privatization in its various forms, corporatization and financialization of energy services – which result in higher rates, diminished or refusal of services to non-profitable sectors or areas, deprivation of access to commons such as land and water.

- b. Dirty and harmful energy projects –

Many communities in Asia and all over the world face dirty and harmful energy projects and systems – impacting on health and safety, livelihoods, homes, food production systems, water, environment and ecology. Dirty and harmful energy leads to massive displacement, illness and disease, loss of means of

livelihoods, loss of lives, loss of biodiversity, destruction of natural resources, deepening of poverty, undermining and destroying ways of life of communities, and the violation of peoples' sovereignty over their resources.

Dirty and harmful energy systems include the production and distribution of fossil fuel energies – oil, coal, conventional and nonconventional (fracking) gas – and others such as nuclear, mega hydro and geothermal projects, waste to energy incineration. It also includes false energy solutions to climate change such as agro fuel industries that threaten and undermine the right to food.

Note – we have initial resource materials on these dirty and harmful energy types and will develop more.

c. Energy and the Climate Crisis –

Energy systems are at the heart of the climate crisis – and there is only a small window of time for preventing catastrophic climate change. The introduction and rapid increase of the use of fossil fuel throughout the history of industrialization has led to excessive accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere driving dangerous climate change. The continuous expansion of production and consumption of fossil fuel in an economic system of unfettered extraction and production for profit threatens all life on earth, but most especially people of the South made even more vulnerable by economic, political, social, gender and racial oppression and exploitation, and environmental and geographic threats.

Instead of addressing the causes of climate change—governments, corporations, international financial institutions, and the social institutions they control are aggressively imposing false and harmful energy solutions to people and communities.

3. The struggles to transform energy systems have been met by repression and violence by governments and/or private corporations involving harassments, arrests, imprisonment, summary executions, and massacres. The competition for control of energy resources and markets has also spawned wars within countries and between states. Thus, the struggle to transform energy systems also involves defense, protection and assertion of civil and political right, and of the safety and lives of people and communities from resource wars.

C. Our Calls and Demands

1. All governments must fulfill their state obligations to ensure universal and equitable access to energy to meet people's and communities basic needs and the realization of their human rights. This includes ensuring delivery to all areas, sectors and communities, and ensuring affordable and socialized rates.
2. Stop the privatization, corporatization, commercialization and financialization of energy systems.
3. Stop new dirty and harmful energy projects and systems, phase out existing dirty and harmful energy, and ensure a swift and just transition to clean and renewable and democratically managed energy systems for people and communities. Stop false and harmful energy solutions to climate change. Note – we will

develop a common platform on what is dirty and harmful energy

4. All loans used for the privatization of energy and for the financing of dirty and harmful energy projects should be treated as illegitimate and thus, should be refused, canceled or repudiated.
5. End government subsidies and public handouts to private dirty and harmful energy companies.
6. Institute democratic stewardship and management of energy systems—involving a combination of public structures, community-based organizations and cooperatives, and a highly regulated role for and fulfillment of obligations of the private sector in the period of transition.

Note – we will develop resource materials and a common platform on forms of democratic stewardship and management of energy systems, including ways of financing these systems

7. Ensure the just transition to safe, renewable and clean energy as quickly as possible –
 - a. Adopt agreements, establish laws, formulate and implement energy programs and policies—local, national, regional and global—to ensure a just and fast transition.
 - b. Mobilize public finance for the development of and the just and fast transition to safe, renewable and clean energy.
 - c. End global agreements that obstruct the fast transition to safe, renewable and clean energy.
 - d. For governments of the north to fulfil their obligations under the Climate Convention to provide climate finance and technology for shifting

to safe and renewal energy and other mitigation measures by countries in the South as well as for dealing with the impacts of climate change. Climate finance should be sufficient, additional to other financial obligations, non-debt creating, not generated through speculative instruments or at the expense of marginalized and impoverished peoples in the north.

Note – we will develop resource materials and a common platform on what is clean, safe and renewable energy, standards and criteria, and ways of sustainable and responsible financing.

8. Stop harassment, repression and violence inflicted on people and communities who are defending their communities from dirty and harmful energy projects, who are asserting their right to energy access, who are struggling to transform energy systems and fighting climate change, protect and fulfill human rights.
9. Stop excessive energy consumption by corporations and elites and their relentless, destructive extraction of resources, over production, and expansion of control of markets aimed at accumulation of profits, their control of the commons and of our societies. This involves ending economic agreements, programs and policies that drive and facilitate these processes.
10. The transformation of energy systems must be directed at achieving immediate and drastic reduction of global GHG emissions to keep global temperature as far below 1.5 degrees Celsius as possible. The burden must be shared equitably based on historical responsibility and capacity.
11. Transform the current dominant capitalist system and establish alternative systems that are democratic and

equitable across communities, gender, race, between and within nations, that are aimed at meeting the needs of peoples rather than the relentless pursuit of profit, that are compatible with the limits of the planet and in harmony with nature.

This involves the fundamental restructuring of ownership of resources, of production and of consumption, the transformation of local, national and global, social, economic and financial, and political systems.

We must build our power, gain momentum in our fights, combine our efforts, intensify and hasten our struggles—local, national, regional and global—for the transformation of energy systems and our societies as rapidly as possible.

**This was originally published in the website of the Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development. <http://www.apmdd.org/resources/67-ecological-debt-environmental-justice-climate-change/267-towards-an-asian-platform-on-transforming-energy-systems>. It is based on the discussions during the Asian Conference on Energy and Asian Climate Justice Assembly.*