

Energy Transition in the Asia-Pacific: New Challenges and Opportunities for Regional Cooperation

KEY CONCLUSIONS

The swift development of the Asia-Pacific has led to an increase in energy consumption

"The Asia-Pacific region is unique for its diversity – in climate conditions, cultural traditions, and implemented technologies. Likewise, it is one of the most rapidly developing regions in the world, where the population is growing quickly and so are implemented technologies. This increases the need for constantly evolving energy infrastructure," Anton Inyutsyn, Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation.

"As the economy grows, so does energy demand. <...> Every five years, our demand doubles," Sok Khavan, Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Energy of Cambodia.

"Asian countries' economies are growing quickly, and so is demand for electricity. It is expected that the population will grow from 65 million people in 2014 to 750 million in 2025. The economy is growing faster than 5% a year. <...> Demand for electricity will double in the period from 2014 to 2025," Nguyen Phuong Mai, Deputy Head, Electricity and Renewable Energy Authority, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

PROBLEMS

Rapid development is creating challenges for the energy sector and the environment

"Today, the Asia-Pacific region is facing serious challenges when it comes to development and the energy sector. <...> Industry demands energy, the population demands energy, and what's more, energy is needed for development and for decreasing environmental impact. Moreover, we have the 2030 development goals. And, finally, how are we supposed to satisfy our responsibilities under the Paris Agreement on climate change?" Liu Hongpeng, Director, Energy Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); The Global Energy Prize Expert.

"It is impossible to noticeably improve standards of living without decreasing the environmental impact of transport. <...> We can talk about the fact that there will be some sort of competition between gas and electric automobiles," Anton Inyutsyn, Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation.

"On the one hand, we must supply electricity more reliably. On the other hand, demand for green energy places additional demands on this industry," Merrille Godfrey Abeywickrama Goonetilleke, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Mutual distrust slows regional energy and environmental cooperation

"Currently, regional integration is impossible because of cultural, social, and political differences. <...> Agreements and initiatives like Energy Without Borders would require a lot of time and patience," Merrille Godfrey Abeywickrama Goonetilleke, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Lack of financing

"A very specific issue is that the infrastructure we're developing is made to satisfy local demands, and, if we expect to work on a regional level, we need to plan proactively. This means sizable investments. We currently don't have enough funds to invest in infrastructure," Pravin Raj Aryal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

"We can produce more than 10 thousand MW of electricity, but we see that opportunities aren't being seized because of certain financial limitations. <...> We need far wider cooperation," Muhammad Naeem Malik, Director, SAARC Energy Centre.

Electric power isn't always accessible and affordable

"The main difficulty we are facing is achieving continuity of service, high quality, and accessible pricing," Mohammad Hossain, Director General, Power Cell Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

SOLUTIONS

A strategic approach to solving energy objectives

"More attention is now being paid to energy agenda issues, and they are increasingly being solved systematically and strategically. We were able to identify the problems related to energy access and started searching for solutions to our stated objectives. Undoubtedly, in the future we will be able to develop mechanisms to unite our efforts in the interest of the entire region," Anton Inyutsyn, Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation.

A transition to environmentally friendly fuels

"LNG is the ecologically friendly fuel of the future. <...> We're having to move away from coal towards LNG to make our power generation greener," Merrille

Godfrey Abeywickrama Goonetilleke — Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

“Moving away from coal towards gas decreases carbon dioxide emissions twofold,” Pavel Velikanov, Unit Head, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation.

“When we talk about improving the energy situation in rural areas, we’re also using biomass generation. <...> A growing number of our stations are powered by biogas. <...> The first plant produced over 2700 cubic metres of biogas,” Pravin Raj Aryal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

“We have a lot of hydro energy potential. We are not able to use it all, so we export it to neighbouring countries. <...> In this way, we hope to increase the use of renewable sources of energy in the region,” Khamso Kouphokham, Deputy Director General, Department of Energy Policy and Planning, Ministry of Energy and Mines of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Developing international and regional cooperation

“We intend to strengthen investment ties with all our large energy partners and are ready to cooperate regionally,” Ruslan Karabulov, Director of the Department of International Cooperation and Integration Processes, Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

“Our general objective is to increase energy interdependence and create an Asian energy market in the interest of increasing energy security, accessibility, and continuity of service,” Nguyen Phuong Mai, Deputy Head, Electricity and Renewable Energy Authority, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.