



POSITION PAPER

# Rapid and Just Transition in South Asia



*The civil society representatives from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka jointly formed the South Asia Just Energy Alliance (SAJTA) through a three-day-long process of the South Asia Energy Colloquium (SAEC) jointly organized by Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN), Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) and Growthwatch from from 12-14 July 2023 in Kathmandu, Nepal. SAJTA recognizes and respects the shared border, struggle, history and culture in the South Asian territories.*

**We, the South Asian civil society representatives, along with our friends from regional and international organizations, being part of the three-day-long South Asia Energy Colloquium 2023 held in Kathmandu, Nepal –**

**In pursuit** of the objectives of the Colloquium and being guided by the basic principles of human rights, safe environment, inclusiveness, equality, meaningful participation and special needs of gender, intersectionality, people with disabilities and indigenous people;

**Acknowledging** the prevailing historical, cultural and territorial homogeneity, with special recognition of the ethnic diversity, in South Asia and the long struggles of the communities for their rights and access to the basic essential services, including primary energy and electricity;

**Taking into account** the adverse impacts of Climate Change in South Asian countries, which are recognized as the Most Vulnerable Countries (MVCs) and its serious implications on the communities, especially underprivileged ones, natural resource dependents and indigenous peoples;

**Recalling** the Article-2 of the Paris Agreement, which commits to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels for reducing the risks and impacts of climate change, and IPCC Assessment Reports, which warns the countries about the negative impacts of climate change and recommends a rapid transition;

**Expressing** concerns about the odious and destructive financing by the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) and Export Credit Agencies (ECA), including those which are under the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Japan-led Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B);

**Understanding** that multilateralism and pluralism, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), has become ineffective and has negatively impacted South Asian joint actions to come most urgent environmental actions, including the energy sector;

**Opposing** human rights violations, involuntary displacements, attacks on human rights defenders, land grabbing, appropriating forests, water bodies, open space & other natural resources, and environmental destruction by the energy projects for collecting extractives and expanding fossil fuel and, in the name of the energy transition;

**Disagreeing** with the recent trend of promoting fossil gas, especially Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), by the dirty companies, MDBs and ECAs as a transitional fuel in South Asian countries, considering the climatic and economic impacts of fossil gas;

**Strongly Opposing** the import dependency in the energy sector, including cross-border energy trade (CBET), and its impact on current debt, inflation and pressure on foreign currency reserves and regional integrity.

**Expressing** concerns about greenwashing technologies, e.g., liquid hydrogen, ammonia, carbon capture and storage (CCS), which are still unproven and expensive, would decrease energy security and lock the region into an unsustainable long-term dependency on imported fuels;

**Denouncing** the recent initiatives of the MDBs and ECAs to support the predatory dirty energy companies by providing policy support and additional financial resources in the name of the Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM);

**Expressing** further concerns about the adverse environmental, social and cultural impacts of large hydropower, geothermal and Waste-to-Energy (WTE), and mining for primary energy, raw materials of renewable energy and battery storage;

**Emphasizing** the potential of Renewable Energy in South Asia, especially solar, small hydro and wind, which can fulfill the total energy demand of the region through a mix of community-owned, utility-scale and distributed energy systems;

**Affirming** the strength of the citizens, including indigenous peoples, to achieve energy sovereignty through diversified community-owned Renewable



Energy systems based on the latest inventions, financial mechanisms and policy support;

**Hereby declaring the Collective Position Paper of the South Asia Just Transition Alliance (SAJTA)** to ensure a rapid, just and equitable transition in South Asia —

**Calling** the Governments of South Asia and bilateral & multilateral institutions to stop financing - including equity investment, guarantee, insurance, tax exemption and subsidies - any fossil fuel-based energy projects;

**Urging** to explore joint actions to combat air pollution and bring joint climate-friendly policies and solutions, including fossil-free development and just transitions, further emphasizing upholding meaningful consultations and full information disclosure to the public at all levels;

**Demanding** to stop the CBET of primary energy or electricity derived from fossil fuels and large hydropower projects, as those create negative impacts on the society, environment, culture and atmosphere;

**Commending** to reconstructing the economy towards a zero-carbon development path and re-assessing the primary and secondary energy demands based on nature-friendly lives and livelihoods;

**Further urging** for a Fossil-free BRI and the BIG-B in South Asia, in addition to the other infrastructural and economic initiatives, which will respect the community ownership, 'no harm' principles and inclusive development;

**Inducing** to realize fair and adequate climate reparations from the historically



responsible countries, which includes, but is not limited to, finance, technology transfer and technical support;

**Urging** to impose Green Tax or Carbon Tax on excessively emitting fossil fuel-based industries, including those in the transport and energy sector, at a standard rate for creating Green Transition funds;

**Persuading** to promote distributed community-owned mini- & micro-grid renewable energy systems consisting of, inter alia, Agrovoltatics, Courtyard Wind, Floating Solar, Ground-mounted Solar, Rooftop Solar & Wind, Run-of-the-River Hydro, and Solar Irrigation;

**Recommending** decentralized smart grids across South Asia capable of transmitting and distributing energy from renewable sources.

**Demanding** blended finance for Renewables including, but not limited to, Budget Allocation, subsidies, Public Equity, Zero-interest Loans, Feed-in Tariff (FIT) and formation of special funds for green transition;

**Urging** to find a balance between promoting renewable energy and ensuring it is environmentally and human rights-friendly through environmental, social and cultural impact assessment as well as benefit-sharing policies to promote effective participation;

**Pronouncing** the rights of Smallholders, indigenous people and intersectionality, Gender, People with Disabilities and Laborers in just transition. To this end, the bilateral & multilateral institutions and governments must adopt Human Rights and Environment standards to ensure at

source before importing commodities, including energy and power;

**Demanding** immediate stopping of all reprisals against human rights defenders and whistleblowers and endorsing strong protection mechanisms for them to ensure a just and equitable transition;

**Recommending** formulation of policies and guidelines to introduce and promote Renewable Energy Cooperatives (REC) with ownership of the citizens with a special focus on the smallholders;

**Imploring** to start multilateral cooperation in the region and beyond for a decarbonized South Asia by 2050, particularly strengthening the regional green grid and mobilizing technologies, policies and financial resources for renewables;

**Urging** to ensure Transparency and Accountability of the projects, sponsors, developers and financing institutions through timely and complete disclosure of the project-related information, meaningful consultation, and effective participation;

**Ensuring** that all the propositions in this Position Paper align with the Paris Agreement, IPCC recommendations and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed upon at United Nations that the Governments and bilateral and multilateral institutions have been considering as a priority.