



# JUST TRANSITION FORUM IN ASIA 2021

## Summary Report

09 September 2021

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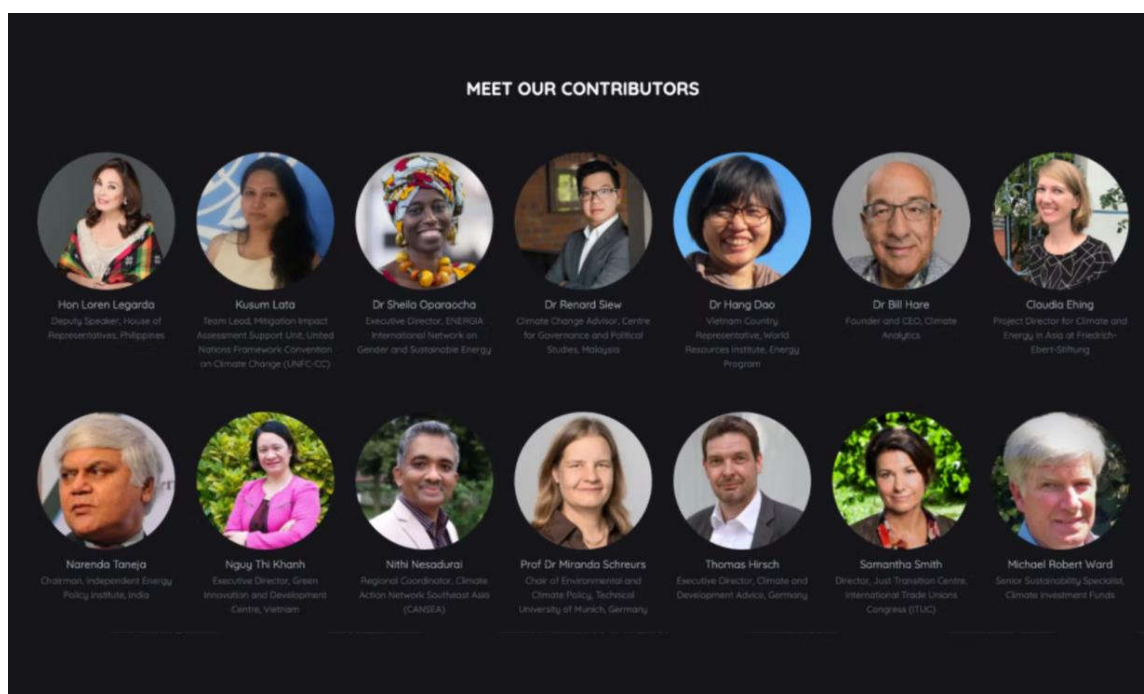
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# 1. Overview

Amidst the climate crisis, the Asia Pacific region, as well as the rest of the world, must drastically reduce carbon emissions to meet the 1.5°C target in line with the Paris Agreement and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This requires a transition of energy systems from being dependent on fossil fuels to being low-carbon and climate-resilient. It means ramping up investments in renewable energy and ending new investments in fossil fuels' production to head towards a net-zero emissions pathway. Most importantly, this energy transition needs to be just, inclusive and sustainable to ensure that no one is left behind, especially the millions of poor and vulnerable people in the region, by making them part of the solution.

Against this backdrop, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Regional Climate and Energy Project in Asia in collaboration with Climate Action Network Southeast Asia (CANSEA) organised the first-ever Just Transition Forum in Asia (JTFA) on 9 September 2021. It aimed to serve as a platform for political discussions on just transition by connecting various stakeholders such as civil society, government, think tanks, the labour movement and private sector at the national, regional and global levels, as well as multilateral climate agencies. JTFA aspired to create an opportunity to deepen discussions on just transition by learning from experts, practitioners, policy makers and communities' own experiences.

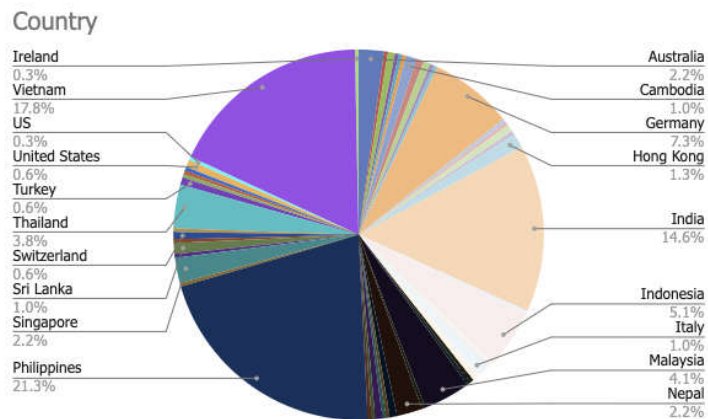
See page 9 for background and programme of JTFA 2021.



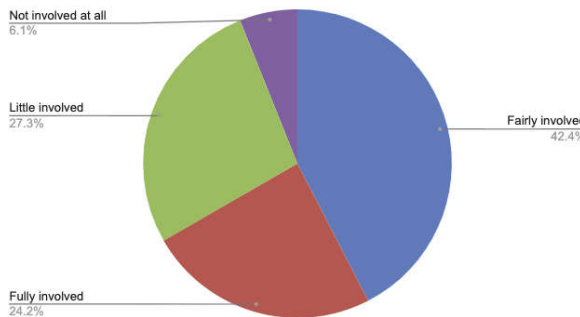
Speakers and moderators of the plenary discussions at JTFA 2021

## 2. JTFA 2021 in numbers

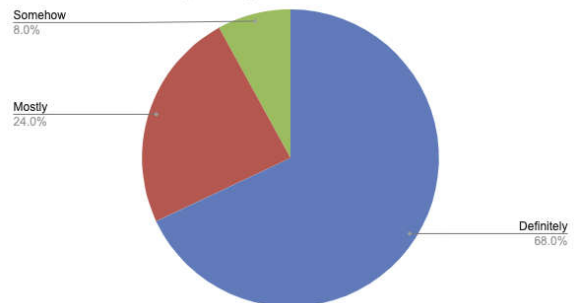
Three hundred and sixteen participants registered for the forum with most coming from the Philippines (21.3%), Vietnam (17.8%), India (14.6%) and Indonesia (5.1%). Among them, 42.4% were fairly involved in climate and energy policy while 24.2% said that they were fully involved. Through an evaluation conducted at the end of the forum, the inaugural JTFA was considered a success with 68% of participants saying it met their expectations, 63% saying that it was useful and applicable to their respective work, and 93.8% saying they would come back next year.



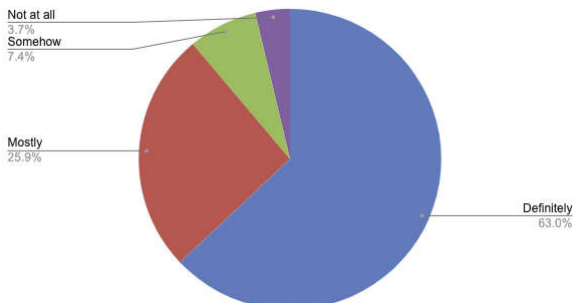
How involved are you in shaping climate and energy policy?



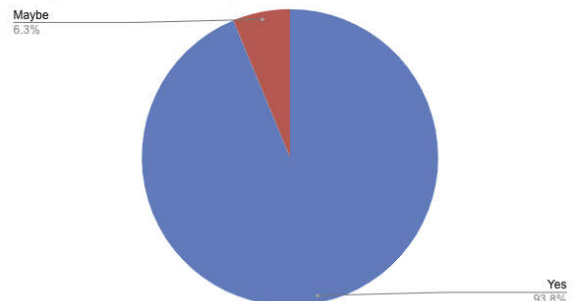
Did the event meet your expectations?



Will it be useful / applicable for your work?



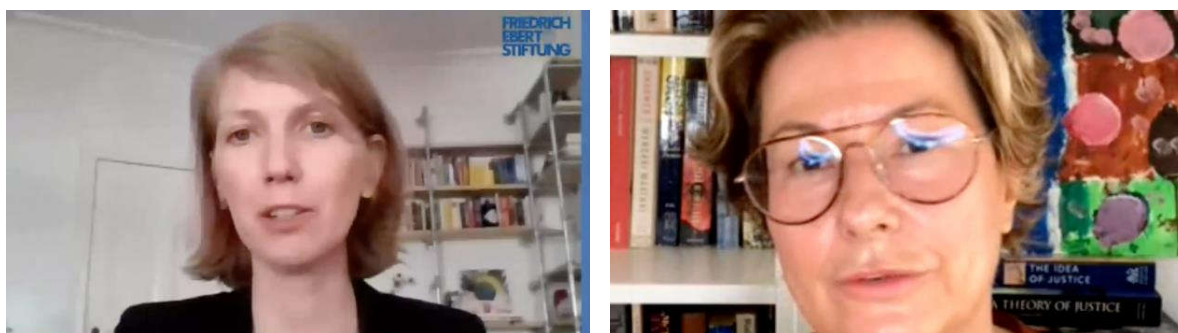
Will you come back next year?



### 3. Opening remarks and keynote address

Claudia Ehing, Director of the Regional Climate and Energy Project in Asia presented the opening remarks. She talked about aligning a just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia to the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature goal. She highlighted FES's goal of social-economic transformation through balancing ecological sustainability, social justice and economic progress, to be attained through a just energy transition that leaves no one behind. This was underpinned on deepening the understanding of just transition with various stakeholders in the Asian context.

The keynote address was delivered by Samantha Smith, Director of the Just Transition Centre at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). She gave an overview of the United Nations and International Labour Organization definitions of just transition and the differences in the context of regions. Smith underscored the importance of social dialogue, through the involvement of employers, unions and governments, and decent work, through new good jobs with collective bargaining agreements and social protection and benefits.



Claudia Ehing (left) and Samantha Smith (right) delivered the opening remarks and keynote address, respectively

### 4. Panel discussions

The first panel on **Energy Transition in Asia** moderated by Nithi Nesadurai, Director and Regional Coordinator at CANSEA included speakers from government, civil society, think tank and a climate fund. Loren Legarda, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Philippines, spoke about the opportunities that renewable energy can offer in supporting the needs of millions of people in her country, especially in the pandemic response and recovery. Legarda shared her work on passing the Renewable Energy Act to accelerate the energy transition away from the country's current dependence on coal and other fossil fuels.

Dr Bill Hare, Founder and CEO of Climate Analytics and Michael Robert Ward, Senior Sustainability Specialist at Climate Investment Funds both made the economic and technical arguments for phasing out coal and other fossil fuels in developing countries in the region. Hare pointed out that the development of coal-fired power infrastructure in the Philippines and

Southeast Asia came with financial risks as well as negative impacts on climate. Ward highlighted that investments with both procedural justice and distributional justice are key in climate action and just transition, as seen in case studies from Bolivia, Ghana and South Africa that Asia could learn from.

Dr Hang Dao, Vietnam Country Representative of the World Resources Institute, emphasised the role of government and regulators to create an enabling policy environment to connect producers and consumers in meeting procurement requirements. She narrated her country's positive experience with the Clean Energy Investment Accelerator.

The second panel, moderated by Dr Miranda Schreurs, Professor of Environment & Climate Policy at the Technical University of Munich, Germany, focused on **Asia's Just Transition in the Post-COVID World**. Samantha Smith was joined by Dr Renard Siew, Climate Change Advisor at the Centre for Governance and Political Studies, Malaysia, and Narendra Taneja, Chairman of the Independent Energy Policy Institute, India.

Deepening the concept of social dialogue in just transition, Smith highlighted the role of trade unions as well as key sectors in Asia, such as healthcare and education in the care economy as dialogue partners, as society moves away from coal and other fossil fuels. To provide a country and regional perspective, Siew shared his experience advocating for a Climate Change Act in Malaysia as well as for the ASEAN Green New Deal. Both will accelerate the energy transition and tap into the region's renewable energy potential as a fast-growing region, and now, the fifth largest economy in the world. Taneja provided the context of energy-poor populations in India and the South Asian region by linking the energy discussion with the narrative of the climate crisis. He concluded that given such a context, the transition in such regions needs to be just and also democratic by ensuring it is inclusive.



Speakers and moderators of the first two panel discussions:

Top row (L-R): Bill Hare, Michael Robert Ward, Miranda Schreurs and Samantha Smith

Bottom row (L-R): Hang Dao, Nithi Nesadurai, Renard Siew and Narendra Taneja

## 5. Transformation labs

### **A just energy transition**

The first transformational lab involved discussions led by the following FES' offices in the region - FES Philippines, FES Vietnam and FES Shanghai.

- FES Philippines and its partner, the Center for Empowerment, Innovation and Training on Renewable Energy discussed their social transformation project on a small island that empowered women through gender-responsive distributed energy systems and governance for just transition.
- FES Vietnam discussed how low-middle income economies in Southeast Asia can shift their energy systems from coal and fossil fuels to renewable energy through policy, markets and technologies.
- FES Shanghai highlighted the social energy transition in China in sectors such as manufacturing and transport.

### **Experiences from the ground**

The second transformational lab featured the work of organisations involved with just transition at the ground level.

- FES Thailand and their partner academics, economists and activists presented their efforts to align energy transition with the SDGs to ensure an inclusive process. They had demonstrated this through workers' experience in one of Thailand's key industries – the automotive industry.
- Consortium members of the Innovative Regions for a Just Energy Transition shared their outcomes from conducting a six-month-long scoping study on just transition in two active coal mining regions in Indonesia. They concluded that a just transition process in the regions required social dialogue and stakeholder engagement with the different levels of government, employers, business sector, workers and civil society and communities.
- FES India and their partner organisations shared the initiatives of women ecopreneurs in creating a roadmap for an environmentally just future.

### **Just transition as a guiding principle to a low carbon society**

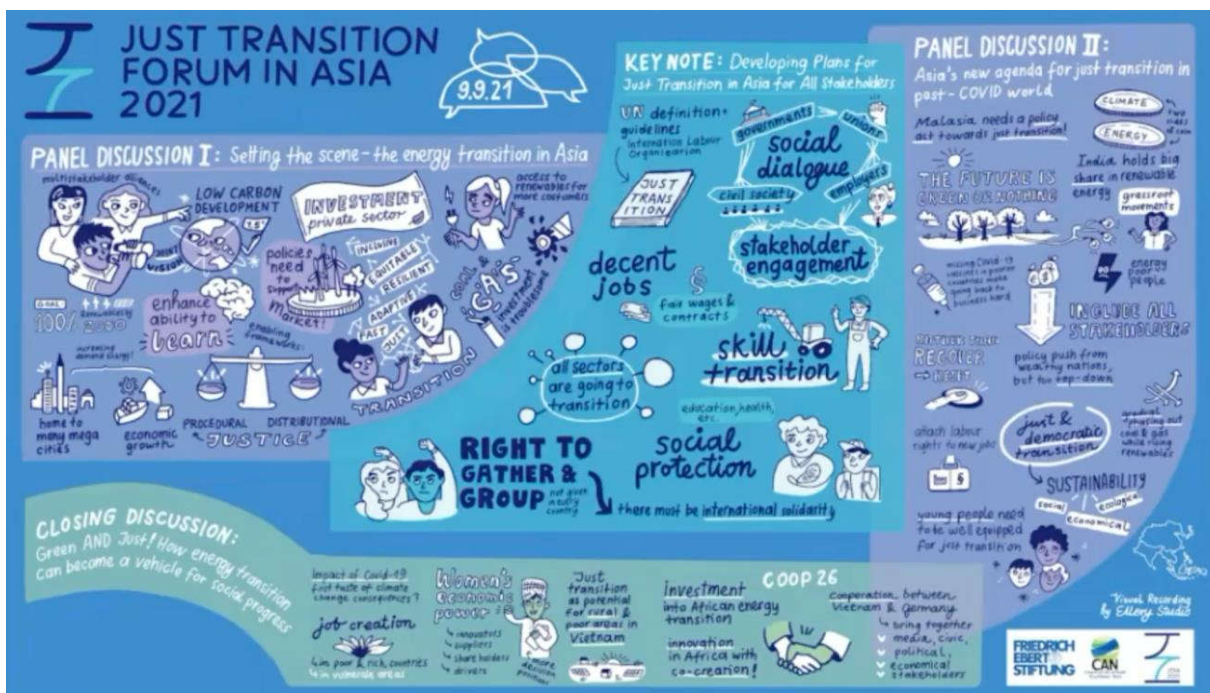
The third transformation lab covered issues relating to gender, localisation and coal.

- ENERGIA, a network of organisations and professionals advocating for equal energy access for women in Asia and Africa, shared case studies where renewable energy had provided livelihoods, compensation and opportunities for empowerment of women.
- FES India shared localisation strategies for achieving a just energy transition.
- Mercator Research Institute on Common Goods and Climate Change provided an analysis of the political economy of coal in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

## 6. Closing plenary

The conclusion of JTFA 2021 was moderated by Thomas Hirsch, Executive Director of Climate & Development Advice, Germany. Kusum Lata, Team Lead of the Mitigation Impact Assessment Support Unit at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change anchored just transition as a key process in achieving the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal as well as the net-zero emissions by 2050 goal through the robust implementation of – and investment in – policies and technologies already in place. To further emphasise the importance of gender justice in the energy transition, Sheila Oparaocha, Executive Director of the ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, advocated for empowering women – particularly young women in low-income urban areas – in playing a bigger part in the renewable energy supply chains which are more inclusive than the conventional fossil fuel energy systems. Nguy Thi Khanh, Executive Director of the Green Innovation and Development Centre (GreenID), Vietnam and recipient of the 2018 Goldman Environmental Prize, shared GreenID's experience in rolling out solar renewable energy systems in Vietnam over the past 10 years. This had helped bridge the gap in energy access for hundreds of households across the country and improved the livelihood of thousands of people in poor and vulnerable communities.

JTFA 2021 was concluded with the visual representation of the entire day's discussions, ideas and concepts by Ellery Studio, as shown through the illustration:



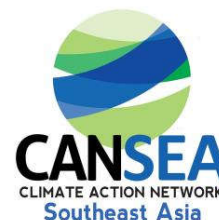


## 7. Media coverage

News items on JTFA 2021 appeared in the media and other platforms as shown below:

01 September	EU-Vietnam Energy Facility / GIZ	News: <a href="#">Just Transition Forum in Asia 2021 - Virtual Forum on Equal Transition in Asia #JTFA2021</a>
02 September	Sustainable Design Research Consortium (SDRC)	Blog: <a href="#">SDRC hosts a Transformational Lab at the FES Just Transition Forum in Asia</a>
09 September	CUTS International	News: <a href="#">Way Forward for 'Just Transition' to E-mobility: Convergence of Policies and Players</a>
09 September	Vietnam Plus	News: <a href="#">Vietnam advised to promote just energy transition</a>
09 September	Icon	News: <a href="#">Vietnam advised to promote just energy transition</a>
10 September	Energetica India	News: <a href="#">For Comprehensive Localisation, Skill Gap in EV Manufacturing Needs to be Addressed via Concerted Efforts of Govt, Industry</a>
10 September	Vietnam Net Global	<a href="#">Vietnam advised to promote just energy transition</a>
10 September	KNN India	News: <a href="#">Convergence of policies and players key for a just transition to e-mobility</a>
12 September	Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP)	Blog: <a href="#">ADFIAP speaks at the FES Just Transition Forum in Asia</a>
12 September	Vietnam Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT)	News: <a href="#">Vietnam advised to promote just energy transition</a>
12 September	Vietnam National Energy Efficiency Programme (VNEEP)	News: <a href="#">Vietnam advised to promote just energy transition</a>
17 September	The Diplomat	Opinion: <a href="#">How Asia Can Achieve a Just Energy Transition in a Post-COVID World</a>
27 September	Climate Action Network (CAN) International	Blog: <a href="#">How Asia can Achieve a Just Energy Transition in a Post-COVID World</a>
11 October	Eco-Business	News: <a href="#">'Just transition' to renewable energy central to Covid-19 recovery in Asia</a>

## Appendix 1 - Background and programme of JTFA 2021



### FES JUST TRANSITION FORUM IN ASIA 09 September 2021

#### Background

To limit global warming to well below 1.5 °C in line with the Paris Agreement and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a transition towards a low-carbon development model is needed. The most important sector to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is the energy sector: coal-fired power plants across the globe need to be closed by 2050 and new coal power investments reduced to a minimum (IPCC, 2018). Nevertheless, the Asian continent is leading the world in coal pipelines. It already accounts for close to half of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and is expected to rise with increasing population rates and industrial advancement. Tackling the global climate emergency will not be possible without a significant shift to renewable energy (RE) in Asia. This makes it so important to envision what kind of energy future should be pursued in Asian countries.

With the global attention on fast-track climate mitigation efforts, especially through divestment from fossil fuels to the RE sector, the issue of a just transition has come increasingly to the core of the international climate debate, driven mainly by trade unions and civil society organisations (CSOs) from across the globe. However, the just transition concept has not yet received the due attention in Asian countries, both in existing RE policies as well as energy development strategies. It is also due to the fact that there is little clarity on what a Just Transition is.

Originating in the labour movement, the [International Labour Organization's Guidelines for a Just Transition](#) were adopted by its governing body in 2015 with member countries now committed to implementation. The concept of Just Transition was also anchored in the 2015 Paris Agreement, thereby signaling the importance of social justice in climate mitigation policies. Since then, the just transition approach has received increasing attention in the planning and negotiation of phase-outs of coal production and consumption. However, its scope goes much further than affected workers in fossil fuel

industries. Just transition provides a powerful narrative that can be applied across multiple sectors, from high-carbon industries – automotive production, construction, transportation, steel – to sectors that we do not normally label “green” or “grey” – education and health. This versatility comes from the fact that just transition is not a “one-size-fits-all” concept, but a negotiated vision and a process centered on dialogue and supported by a set of [guiding principles](#) (Zinecker et al., 2018).

Against this background, the FES Regional Climate and Energy Project, in collaboration with Climate Action Network Southeast Asia (CANSEA), will convene an annual regional **Just Transition Forum in Asia** (JTFA) as a platform for political discussions on just transition, while connecting national, regional and global intervention levels.

### **Objective and target audience**

JTFA aims to facilitate cross-regional information sharing, peer learning and alliance building among different stakeholders in Asian countries. The aim is to develop a broad-based network of progressive players, such as trade unions, academia, CSOs, private sector, think tanks, decision-makers, youth, and gender experts/ feminist activists to explore and envision national, sectoral and regional energy pathways, which challenge dominant development narratives, such as pro-fossil fuel positions. It will also explore how the principle of JT can be applied to other sectors than the energy sector.

JTFA creates an opportunity to deepen debates, learn from scientists, practitioners, and communities’ own experiences and stipulate the formation of broad transformative alliances by bringing different stakeholders together and breaking up national and sectoral silos.

As a recurring regional flagship event, JTFA aims to:

- Contribute to the discourse and agenda setting on Just (Energy) Transition in Asia by enhancing the understanding of the different meanings of and approaches to Just Transition in different contexts
- Formulate recommendations on how the JT approach can be applied in policy and practice to promote a social-ecological transformation (SET) to low-carbon development in the region
- Share knowledge and experience on JT, in particular but not exclusively from the energy sector;
- Draw lessons on existing best practices in the region
- Create networks for future research and activities.

## Programme

Asia, VN CEST

10.00 a.m. / 05.00 a.m.

### Welcome remarks

- Claudia Ehing, Project Director, Climate and Energy in Asia, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Vietnam Office

10.10 a.m. / 05.25 a.m.

### Opening panel discussion: Setting the scene – the energy transition in Asia

- Loren Legarda, Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Philippines
- Dr Bill Hare, Founder and CEO, Climate Analytics
- Michael Robert Ward, Senior Sustainability Specialist, Climate Investment Funds
- Dr Hang Dao, Vietnam Country Representative, World Resources Institute

Facilitator: Nithi Nesadurai, Director and Regional Coordinator, Climate Action Network Southeast Asia (CANSEA)

11.10 a.m. / 06.10 a.m.

Coffee break

11.25 a.m. / 06.25 a.m.

### Transformation labs 1: A just energy transition

1. Social energy transition (hosted by FES Shanghai)
2. Distributed energy systems as catalyst for people's participation in governance (hosted by FES Philippines)
3. Fueling the tiger cubs – opportunities for an energy transition in low-middle-income countries (hosted by FES Vietnam and VIET)

12.25 p.m. / 07.25 a.m.

Coffee break

12.35 p.m. / 07.35 a.m.

### Transformation labs 2: Experiences from the ground

1. Women ecopreneurs create roadmap for environmentally just future (hosted by FES India)
2. Experience from the ongoing International Climate Initiative Just Energy Transition scoping study in Indonesia (hosted by CANSEA)
3. Localisation as a vehicle for achieving just energy transition (hosted by FES India)

13.35 p.m./ 08.35 a.m.

Coffee break

13.45 p.m./ 08.45 a.m.

### Keynote Address:

- Samantha Smith, Director, Just Transition Centre, International Trade Union Confederation

- 14.00 p.m. / 09.00 a.m.      **Panel discussion II: Asia’s new agenda for just transition in the post-COVID world**
- Narendra Taneja, Chairman, Independent Energy Policy Institute, India
  - Dr Renard Siew, Climate Change Advisor, Centre for Governance and Political Studies, Malaysia
  - Samantha Smith, Director, Just Transition Centre, ITUC
- Facilitator: Dr Miranda Schreurs, Professor of Environment & Climate Policy, Technical University of Munich, Germany
- 14.45 p.m. / 09.45 a.m.      Coffee break
- 14.55 p.m. / 09.55 a.m.      **Transformation labs 3: Just transition as a guiding principle to a low carbon society**
1. Role of renewable energy in empowering women (hosted by ENERGIA)
  2. Just transition in Thailand: The situation and visions of various sectors (hosted by FES Thailand)
  3. The political economy of coal in Vietnam, Philippines, India and Indonesia (hosted by Mercator Research Institute on Common Goods and Climate Change)
- 15.55 p.m. / 10.55 a.m.      **Closing panel discussion: Green AND Just? How can energy transition become a vehicle for social progress?**
- Kusum Lata, Team Lead, Mitigation Impact Assessment Support Unit, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
  - Sheila Oparaocha, International Coordinator and Program Manager, ENERGIA
  - Nguy Thi Khanh, Executive Director, Green Innovation and Development Centre, Vietnam and Recipient, Goldman Environmental Prize 2018
- Facilitator: Thomas Hirsch, Executive Director, Climate & Development Advice, Germany
- 16.40 p.m. / 11.40 a.m.      **Closing remarks**
- Nithi Nesadurai, Director and Regional Coordinator, CANSEA

### About the authors:

**CANSEA:** Established in 1992, Climate Action Network Southeast Asia (CANSEA) is the regional node of Climate Action Network (CAN), the world's largest environmental network of over 1,800 civil society organisations in more than 130 countries fighting the climate crisis. CANSEA serves as a catalyst in the Southeast Asian region for mainstreaming and integrating climate change into national and regional development processes through advocacy and awareness-raising, capacity-building, networking and partnerships.

**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)** is the oldest political foundation in Germany. Founded in 1925, it is named after Friedrich Ebert, the first democratically elected president of Germany. FES is committed to the advancement of both socio-political and economic development in the spirit of social democracy, through civic education, research, and international cooperation.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

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