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Press release

COP28 Dialogue Raised Ambitions on Southeast Asia's Coal Phase-Out

Dubai, UAE, 4 December 2023 - The Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership (ETP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) co-hosted a deep-dive session at the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28). This high-level event, titled "Raising Ambitions on Accelerating the Phase-out of Coal in Southeast Asia," convened experts, policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders to address the pressing challenges and opportunities in the region's transition away from coal.

The session initiated critical conversations on strategies to phase out coal and achieve a just low-carbon future in Southeast Asia. Currently, coal remains a dominant energy source and represents 45 per cent of power generation in the region. Balancing rising energy demands and climate commitments, the transition away from coal becomes increasingly complex and crucial in the region. The absence of a well-structured and collaborative transition plan poses a high risk of emissions lock-in.

In his opening remarks, ETP Fund Director Philip Rose brought to attention how “coal-intensive power generation contributes not only to the warming of the earth, but it also poses health risks associated with air pollution, therefore transitioning away from coal-based energy systems is not only a matter of climate change, but also public health.”

The event included a panel discussion exploring the path towards a sustainable, equitable, and coal-free future in Southeast Asia. High-level speakers shared views on the current status, political and financial challenges and opportunities to achieve the ambitious goals of coal phase-out and net zero emissions by 2050 in the region.

Dr Ploy Pattanun Achakulwisut, Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute opened the discussion with a comprehensive visual presentation on the scientific perspectives to accelerate coal transition. Thereafter, Kelvin Fan, APAC Deputy Director of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, elaborated on the role of financial institutions in this transition. ESCAP Energy Division Director Hongpeng Liu offered a regional perspective, focusing on the economic impact of phasing down coal dependency in South and Southeast Asia. Panelist Abhishek Bhaskar, Global Lead, Accelerating Coal Transition Investment Program, Climate Investment Funds drew the conversation towards how concessional financing can support the coal phase-down.

This session offered valuable perspectives on how Southeast Asia can transition towards a renewable-based, efficient energy system in line with the Paris Agreement and Sustainable


Development Goals, especially decent work (Goal 8), affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), climate action (Goal 13), and poverty eradication (Goal 1).



Image caption: Panelists discussing the many facets of coal phase-out, with moderator Fritzie Vergel, ETP Philippines Country Coordinator (far left).

[Image link](#)

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Notes to the editors:

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About Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership (ETP)

The Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership (ETP) is a multi-donor partnership formed by governmental and philanthropic partners to accelerate sustainable energy transition in Southeast Asia in line with the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals. ETP combines the best of the public and private sectors with the UN to help mobilize and coordinate technical and financial resources to build the foundations for renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable resilient infrastructures. ETP empowers its partner countries – Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines to transition towards a sustainable energy system, generate economic growth and ensure energy security. Read more: www.energytransitionpartnership.org.