



Yangon
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Stop all planned coal-fired power plants projects supported by JBIC and JICA in Myanmar

We, altogether 449 civil society organizations across Myanmar, unanimously call for the unconditional stop of all coal-fired power plants projects in Myanmar as such projects are posing the grave threats to the public health and are severely damaging the natural environment.

Civil society organizations strongly urge the Government of Myanmar to review the existing policies on building the coal-fired power plants, developed as a short-term remedy to the long standing problem of electric power supply shortage, which is the symbolic consequence of the poor governance of the successive governments in Myanmar.¹

Likewise, we note that the policy action plan to extract five million tons of natural coal by 2030, as outlined in the National Energy Policy,² will definitely lead to the increased unjust exploitation of natural resources in civil war-affected ethnic areas.

We, civil society organizations, solemnly protest against any coal extraction and the development of coal-fired power plant projects, as such activities are closely associated with the forced land grabbing of public properties and farmlands, the damage of natural environment that is conducive to good health and well-being and the negative impacts on the livelihoods of local people. Furthermore, these projects are not in line with our highly valued practices of accountability and the principles of sustainable development.³

¹ National Energy Policy, Chapter 4 (The Energy Sector Development Plan), Sub Chapter 2 (Expansion of new power plants), Sub-Title (c) (Coal-fired power plants).

² Chapter 2 (Energy Sector, the Present Situation), paragraph 25, sub-para (f) (Coal).

³ Principles of Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA).

In striving for energy sufficiency and adequate electricity supply for domestic consumption, we cannot accept by any means the construction of coal-fired plants, which are motivated by short-term economic interests, but will damage the natural environment and social harmony of the local people.

Before 2010, there was only one coal-fired power plant operating. However, under the administration of President U Thein Sein, which claimed to have “the clean government and the good governance”, the number of coal-fired power plant projects has increased to 17.⁴

With the legitimate concerns of possible land grabbing, damages on communities’ livelihoods, occurrences of health hazards from pollution of air and land, and other environmental damages, the local people from the proposed project areas are strongly protesting the coal-fired power plant projects.⁵

The most important fact is that the prevailing situation in Myanmar lacks the necessary rules, regulations and laws to effectively limit greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and chemical wastes such as mercury, which are normally generated as by-products from coal-fired power plants. Therefore, there are not favorable conditions to build any of such dirty plants in Myanmar.⁶

In addition, it is alarming that the neighboring countries of China and Thailand have established policies to control the rich energy sources in Myanmar on a long-term basis. The massive investment in the energy sector from neighboring countries, and export of energy, is leading to losses of energy sources for the people of Myanmar, and will exacerbate energy deficiency in our country.⁷

We, civil society organizations, strongly urge to the Government of Myanmar to take actions in a timely manner to rectify their erroneous policies, specifically, the selling of natural gas and hydropower to neighboring countries, while planning to build coal-fired power plants to fulfill the shortage of domestic electricity supply.

⁴ Annex (1), the list of the proposed and planned coal-fired power plants.

⁵ Andin, Dawei, Nga Yoke Kaung, Kwan Chan Gone, Myeik, Kawt Thaung Newspaper Journals

⁶ This issue of moving the dangerous factories from Thailand to Dawei Deep Sea Port was asked by Pyithu Hluttaw Representative U Thein Lwin, Committee on the Protection of Natural Environment on 04.02.2013.

⁷ Myanmar is an “extreme example of Energy Poverty”, IEA World Energy Outlook 2012.

We earnestly urge the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to avoid providing any support, directly or indirectly, including funding, providing technology, and policy drafting, to projects such as coal-fired power plants, which are strongly opposed by the people of Myanmar.

Sincerely,

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