

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies



**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University



Briefing Paper on the Outcomes of the Conference on

**Energy Security in Southeast Asia and beyond –
from Competition to Cooperation?
Civil Society's Stake in Asia's and Europe's Energy Policy**

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Conference Objectives

In the run-up to the next United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2009, energy security will be one of the key issues on the political agenda. As stated in the IEA World Energy Outlook 2009, energy is at the centre of the climate change problem and, therefore, must form the core of the solution. However, concerns are mounting that the international community might fail to establish effective global cooperation to tackle the challenges of energy security, especially in the context of climate change.

Against this background, the conference on 'Energy Security in Southeast Asia and beyond – from Competition to Cooperation? Civil Society's Stake in Asia's and Europe's Energy Policy', could not have been more timely. This was jointly organised by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Office for Regional Cooperation in Asia, and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

There is potential danger of conflict found in various antagonistic postures and behaviour. Many countries rely on direct economic, political, diplomatic and even military influence over energy-rich regions to secure their energy supply. The dominant approaches are aimed at extending influence and increasing positions of power. However, cooperative efforts, whether within regional frameworks like the European Union (EU), or towards the creation of more extensive governance structures in practice, play no role. The crucial question is how a fair and effective multilateral system can be implemented – a system that aims at making the international energy framework equally advantageous for exporting states, large-scale consumers, as well as for newly-industrialised and developing countries.

Energy security is an important area in which the concerns of the marginalised need to be heard. Decisions are increasingly being taken by a few and there is an ever-increasing governance deficit at both domestic and international levels. Therefore, efforts to mitigate this negative trend and the important role of civil society in this effort cannot be overlooked.

To address the gap in participation and the contributions that civil society can make in energy security issues, this conference provided a platform for representatives from Asian and European civil society organisations (CSOs), policymakers, security analysts as well as leading academics from the field of energy security to initiate a critical assessment of the various frameworks held by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and EU member countries on energy security cooperation.

Key Messages and Recommendations

Challenges in the Field of Energy Security and Energy Cooperation in Asia and Europe

The extensive discussion of current trends in energy security cooperation and particularly the EU's ambitions to move towards a sustainable, secure, and competitive energy future might be best reflected by the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Singapore, Ambassador Holger Standertskjöld, who said, "To achieve the 20 per cent target, the EU will need to install the same capacity of renewable energy that it has done in the last ten years, every single year for the next twelve years. This is indeed ambitious. But it can be done." Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Singapore, Jörg Ranau, quoting the IEA World Energy Outlook 2008, pointed out that "The global energy system stands at the crossroads. Present trends in world energy supply and consumption cannot be maintained in the future neither in ecologic nor in economic nor in social terms."

In this context, Prof Thierry Lefevre from the Centre for Energy Environment Resources Development (CEERD) in Bangkok pointed out the importance of creating mechanisms for external cooperation between states to ensure energy security. Such measures include the creation of a regional energy market and the construction of interconnecting energy infrastructure. He also spoke of the role that the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Ministerial Conference on Energy Security had in coordinating national energy policies and facilitating energy trading. Susanne Wallenoeffler from the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) next spoke of the specific measures the EU had implemented to create a collective energy policy. Both speakers agreed that institutional mechanisms for consultation and dialogue with civil society would be beneficial and could provide a forum for civil society to shape energy security policies

Sharing their insights on the energy policies of Asia's emerging global powers and their significance for global energy security, Mr Suresh Prabhu, the former Indian Union Minister of Power, and Dr Cui Shaozhong from the Department of International Economics, China Foreign Affairs University, highlighted the vital role of energy security for economic development. Mr Prabhu pointed out that India and China now face the same dilemma with regards to oil and strongly recommended that the two countries consider exploring energy resources together to guarantee their energy security. However, he also noted that traditional notions of energy security, which consider control over energy sources paramount and securitise transport networks, would clearly be incompatible with the goal of cooperation between the two nations.

Role of CSOs in Energy Policymaking

The prominent roles which recurred for CSOs in energy policymaking revolved around the '3 As' model, consisting of Awareness, Action and Advocacy. The ultimate goals would be to improve governance through empowering the general public by giving it multiple stakes in energy policymaking, as well as

enhancing government transparency. These aim to complement the state's capacities in providing energy security to the people.

The conference highlighted the significance of increased CSO engagement to ensure fair and just energy (security) policies. Existing consultation processes such as the 'Strategic EU Energy Review' can be considered an improvement on the influence CSOs can exercise. However, the conference reinforced the fact that there is still a tremendous lack of formally established channels for civil society. The importance of CSOs will only rise further in the foreseeable future, especially with regard to climate change ramifications and global mitigation and adaptation measures. In this context, energy security will become one of the determining factors within and between the two regions. While international competition for resources is increasing, it is vital to establish projects for energy cooperation and foster the integration of CSOs in energy security politics. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is committed to provide a platform for continued dialogue and exchange to help bridge the gap between state and non-state actors in the field of energy security policies beyond Asia and Europe.

Putting Ideas of CSO Involvement/Empowerment into Reality – Suggestions by CSO Representatives

1. Institutional Mechanism to Engage CSOs

Currently there is no regional institution that could provide leadership for CSOs in championing energy security issues. Therefore, building on existing regional institutional mechanisms such as the ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) to create institutionalised engagement should be explored. (APA serves as an existing forum for CSOs to express their voices at the regional level.) Furthermore, there could be prospects for a sustainable energy authority (at provincial levels, etc.) that actively involves CSOs. Non-governmental organisations and CSOs could spearhead practical actions as part of a sustainable energy authority. However, the question remains: Who should take the lead in rallying CSOs to build a common platform on energy security issues? Therefore, the next steps for the participants are to collect information on a range of CSOs in the region, networking of CSOs related to energy security, identifying focal points, and developing a regional agenda for CSOs.

2. Platform of Inter-Regional Exchange

The creation of a new platform would add value by focusing on specific energy security-related issues, especially governance issues. It would touch on common issues of interests across various regions, such as nuclear energy, biofuels, alternative forms of renewable energy sources, energy/power grids and transnational energy pipelines. This would improve information-sharing, monitoring, and providing feedback for regional concerted actions. Participants will identify CSOs interested in energy security issues, create a platform and solicit participation from interested CSOs, and commence dialogues to be documented in a report, which could serve as a reference for CSOs.

3. Examining the Roles of CSOs in Multi-Stakeholdership

Partnership, accountability, transparency and mutual respect have been identified as the key themes for critical cooperation among CSOs. Under this framework activities should be institutionalised. To ensure verifiable outputs of co-operative efforts, constant monitoring and evaluation would be necessary. Participants agreed to draft such a monitoring and evaluation mechanism and produce a report which could serve as a tool for CSOs.

4. New Interdisciplinary Approach to Energy Security

Bearing in mind that energy security has moved beyond the traditional to a non-traditional paradigm, the existing economic model to study energy security is deemed insufficient. A new, interdisciplinary economic model is required which takes into account the different perspectives – traditional and non-traditional – of energy security. Finally, a more holistic approach to energy security needs to be conceptualised and established.

5. Building a CSO Network on Energy Security and Climate Change for Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)

To improve GMS water governance structure and practice, various relevant actors – such as regional bodies and the private sector – need to be amalgamated to influence policymaking, e.g. at the regional summit on energy security. To sustain a CSO network which could provide collective CSO leadership in advocacy roles, a common platform with other stakeholders needs to be created and nurtured. While providing or creating space for CSOs via dialogue, special attention needs to be paid to the engagement with the following actors:

- (1) Local and/or grassroots constituencies to enhance social capital;
- (2) The media, which serves as the disseminator of information; and
- (3) Local governments.

Best practices on water governance could be drawn from other regions, e.g. Africa, Europe (the Rhine River) and applied to Asia. The ASEM framework might be used in gaining access to alternative governance models. Follow-up participants intend to build on existing water governance networks and bring a large number of CSOs together onto a common platform for intra-regional dialogue on existing plans. This will be followed by multi-stakeholder and interregional dialogue, resulting in the development of a strategic plan on how to influence policymaking at regional summits.

6. Innovative Ideas for CSOs to Reach Target Audiences

Different target audiences tend to have different perceptions of the information that is disseminated. Therefore, it is beneficial to customise information applying concepts such as social marketing. The appeal of social marketing is its ability to translate abstract energy security related concepts into 'folklore'-type information, which is more easily understood by local communities. It draws on the resources of local communities as well as the government and the media. To ensure the sustainability of the concept, constant monitoring, evaluation and revision of ideas, according to local contexts, are needed. Participants will compile manuals on how to best disseminate information to target audiences, such as educational institutions, media, government officials and citizens.

7. Local Energy Self-reliance

It was also pointed out that the most productive area, where civil society can play a role is in rural electrification, which is non-integrated and whose market is not controlled by large corporations. Due to the large rural population in ASEAN, local area generation becomes feasible to implement in order to address power needs. Local energy self-reliance projects have been advocated as an option to improve local communities' access to electricity and enhance their rights to energy. To ensure the political success of such projects, CSOs should strive to achieve greater local participation and empowerment. As a first step, existing ideas on this concept from across the region will be gathered by the participants in order to tap on best practices. Ultimately, the aim is to derive a regional case study report on local and self-reliant energy development as a key reference.

Organisers

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