Asia Must Not Become the Next Frontier for Fossil Gas Expansion

Joint Statement from Asian Civil Society Organisations

14 September 2026

As governments, fossil fuel companies, financial institutions and industry leaders gather in Bangkok from 14–17 September 2026 for Gastech, one of the world's largest gas and LNG events, we, the undersigned organisations from across Asia and around the world, call on decision-makers to reject further expansion of fossil gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) and instead accelerate a just transition towards renewable energy.

Gastech has evolved beyond a forum for exchanging views on technology and innovation. In recent years, it has served as a strategic platform for governments, companies and financiers to negotiate and announce agreements, long-term LNG contracts and major infrastructure investments. As Gastech comes to Bangkok in 2026, there are serious concerns that this event could facilitate a new wave of gas and LNG expansion across Asia with new deals and investment decisions that lock countries into long-term fossil gas dependence. These financial and policy commitments have consequences that extend far beyond the conference itself, shaping national energy systems and policies for decades.

This is particularly concerning as the fossil fuel industry continues to promote fossil gas and LNG as a "transition fuel" or a "cleaner alternative" necessary for energy security and as an enabler of future industries such as data centres and artificial intelligence (AI). But fossil gas is not clean, and its climate impacts can be as bad as coal—or even worse. Methane is released throughout the gas supply chain, with fossil gas operations emitting close to 34 million tonnes of methane in 2025.

Across Asia, communities living near gas fields, pipelines, LNG terminals and gas-fired power plants are already experiencing the impacts of fossil gas development. These impacts include pollution, pressure on land and water resources, threats to health and livelihoods, displacement, risks to human rights and damage to biodiversity. Any discussion about Asia's energy future must therefore put the rights, voices and lived experiences of affected communities at its centre.

Yet LNG cannot deliver the energy security that the fossil fuel industry promises. Import-dependent Asian countries remain exposed to volatile global prices, geopolitical tensions, shipping route disruptions and long-term contracts that can lock consumers into expensive fossil fuels for decades. Recent LNG price spikes linked to the US-Iran war have hit Asian economies the hardest. Southeast Asia's fossil fuel import bill has risen to around US$160 billion, increasing costs for industries and households dependent on imported fuels.

Just four years after the global energy crisis of 2022, geopolitical disruptions are once again undermining the case for LNG as an affordable and secure source of energy for Asia.

Southeast Asia already has more than 100 GW of gas-fired power capacity and around 46 million tonnes per year (mtpa) of LNG import capacity currently in development. If built, these projects would make it near-impossible to stop the region's dependence on fossil gas, despite growing uncertainty over their economic and energy-security viability. More than 60% of gas-fired power capacity in development globally is located in Asia, making the region the centre of the next wave of gas expansion.

Despite these expansion plans, the financial viability of continued gas expansion is weak. While proponents are banking on Asian LNG demand to absorb new supplies, regional demand is plateauing as projects across the region are facing delays, cancellations, rising costs and difficulties securing financing. In the Philippines, two major LNG-to-power projects were cancelled in 2025 amid difficulties securing offtake agreements, while government officials said the country was unlikely to need additional LNG import capacity in the near term. In Thailand, weak electricity demand has already led the government to delay the operation of a gas-fired power plant under construction. In Vietnam, planned gas projects have stalled amid concerns over the bankability of power purchase agreements, putting the country's plan to develop 22.5 GW of LNG power by 2030 increasingly into question.

Existing gas-fired power plants are also increasingly underutilised, while recent research finds that less than one-third of planned gas-fired power capacity in Southeast Asia is expected to come online by 2030 given high prices and supply constraints. Together, these trends increase the risk of gas infrastructure becoming stranded assets or uneconomic before the end of its intended lifetime with developing Asia particularly exposed to these risks.

There are also signs that Asian countries are entering into a structural shift towards clean, renewable energy systems and away from dependence on imported LNG and other fossil fuels. South Korea, India, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia are taking steps to accelerate clean energy deployment and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels. In particular, emerging national targets and power-sector plans point to a growing recognition that new fossil fuel infrastructure is increasingly unnecessary. South Korea has set a target of 100 GW of renewable energy capacity, while Indonesia is pursuing a 100 GW solar target. Thailand's new Power Development Plan (PDP 2026) is also expected to place greater emphasis on renewable energy while reducing reliance on imported LNG.

Yet despite these signs of a shift towards clean energy, financial institutions continue to finance fossil fuel expansion. According to the Banking on Climate Chaos 2026 report, the world's 65 largest private banks provided US$906 billion to fossil fuel companies in 2025, an 8% increase from 2024, bringing cumulative financing since the Paris Agreement to US$8.7 trillion. Financing for fossil fuel midstream expansion, including infrastructure such as LNG terminals and pipelines, surged by 84% compared with 2024, reaching US$255 billion.

This is a dangerous and unwanted detour.

Continued gas expansion risks creating a new generation of stranded assets, locking countries into higher energy costs and long-term fossil fuel dependence, while diverting capital away from the renewable energy systems Asia urgently needs and wants. Rather than building more infrastructure that prolongs dependence on fossil fuels, governments and financial institutions should invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency, storage and modernised power grids that can strengthen energy security while developing affordable and resilient energy systems.

We Call for the following immediate actions:

1. Governments must stop fossil gas and LNG expansion and accelerate a rapid and just renewable energy transition.

Governments across Asia must halt all new fossil fuel infrastructure plans and expansion, and redirect public resources toward just renewable energy, energy efficiency, grids and storage. The transition must protect workers and communities, ensure affordable access to energy and enable meaningful participation by people affected by energy and infrastructure decisions.

2. LNG-exporting countries must stop expanding fossil gas supply.

Major LNG-exporting countries, including Australia and the United States, must stop approving new gas fields, LNG export terminals and associated infrastructure designed to supply decades of additional fossil gas consumption. Exporting countries should not use unrealistic demand projections from Asia to justify continued fossil fuel expansion.

3. Governments must reject false solutions that prolong fossil fuel dependence.

Public resources should not be diverted toward costly and unproven technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), or hydrogen and ammonia co-firing, when these technologies risk extending the life of fossil fuel infrastructure rather than delivering a genuine transition away from fossil fuels. South Korea’s recent decision to move away from ammonia co-firing further underscores growing skepticism about the viability of such technologies as a pathway to achieving net-zero targets.

4. Governments must not use data centres and AI as a justification for fossil fuel expansion.

Plans to promote data centres and AI must be subject to comprehensive assessments of their cumulative impacts on electricity demand, water resources, communities, and the environment. Growing demand from these industries must not be used as a blank cheque for new gas infrastructure.

5. Financial institutions must stop financing fossil gas and LNG.

Banks, investors, insurers, export credit agencies and development finance institutions must end financial support for new fossil gas projects across the entire value chain, from upstream production and LNG exports to shipping, import terminals and gas-fired power plants.

6. Companies must put people and the planet before fossil fuel profits.

Fossil fuel companies must stop treating Asia as an unlimited market for LNG expansion. All companies must respect human rights, protect communities and ecosystems, and ensure meaningful public participation in decisions affecting people's lives and livelihoods.

Asia's energy future cannot be built on fossil gas.

We call on governments, financial institutions, fossil fuel companies and LNG exporters to stop expanding fossil gas and instead invest in renewable energy, grids, storage and energy systems that put people and the planet first.

Signatories

AbibiNsroma Foundation

ACF Community Canberra

Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE)

Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD)

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

Auriga Nusantara

Bank Climate Advocates

Centre for Community Mobilization and Support NGO

Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED)

Chachoengsao Repower

Climate Connectors

Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ)

Community Resource Centre (CRC)

Don't Gas Asia

Earthrights International

Energy Shift Southeast Asia

Environics Trust

Fossil Free Japan

Fossil Free Thailand

Friends of the Earth Australia

Glen Eira Emergency Climate Action Network

Greenpeace Australia Pacific

Greenpeace East Asia

Greenpeace Southeast Asia

Grupo de Cambio Climático para América Latina y el Caribe (GFLAC)

Inisiasi Masyarakat Adat (IMA)

Institute for Indigenous Affairs and Development

Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES)

JET in Thailand

Jubilee Australia Research Centre

Kiko Network

Lighter Footprints

Mekong Watch

Menafem Movement

Not1More

Oil Change International (OCI)

Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA)

Oyu Tolgoi Watch

Peoples Climate Assembly

Quest For Growth and Development Foundation

RimbaWatch

Rivers & Rights

Sea of Nations

Solutions for Our Climate (SFOC)

Sustainability Watch (PPAB) Indonesia

WomanHealth Philippines

Yarra Climate Action Now YCAN