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ACTION NEEDED NOW TO CUT GREENHOUSE GASES AND MEET FUTURE ENERGY DEMAND IN ASIA

Report lists top technologies to curb alarming growth in Asia's fossil fuel use

BANGKOK, May 29 – Developing Asian nations could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slash energy consumption by adopting clean energy solutions outlined in *From Ideas to Action: Clean Energy Solutions for Asia to Address Climate Change*, a report released today by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The report paints a sobering picture of the consequences if rising energy consumption continues to follow current trends in Asia's six largest developing nations, including China and India. Without introducing cleaner, more efficient technologies, emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the most common greenhouse gas, will more than triple from these countries, jumping from current levels of 6 billion tons to 20 billion tons by 2030. Greenhouse gases from energy and industrial uses are blamed for contributing to global warming by trapping heat from sunlight in the atmosphere.

The countries in the USAID study currently produce about a quarter of the world's CO₂ emissions, but will likely generate more than half by 2030 if energy consumption trends continue. However, according to the report, promoting even a subset of the available clean energy options could help these countries cut 3.5 billion tons from their annual emissions by 2030, or 25 percent from the total projected increase above current levels.

Most of the carbon emissions will come from coal. Coal use is projected to quadruple by 2030 in developing Asia, mostly from power generation. Despite this increase, the region is also expected to become more dependent on imported fuels, particularly Middle Eastern oil, and to consume a larger share of the world's reserves. Increased coal and oil consumption will complicate efforts to improve air quality in Asia, which already has a majority of the world's most polluted cities.

"This report helps prioritize the best options to start addressing climate change and energy challenges in developing Asia today," said Olivier Carduner, mission director for USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia in Bangkok. "The options are based on proven, existing technologies that will help slow carbon dioxide emissions, cut costs and reduce pollution."

Just this month, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), meeting in Bangkok, stated that controlling greenhouse gas emissions would not disrupt the global economy as was once feared. The cost of inaction, however, would be much greater.



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This USAID report identifies immediate solutions to meet these concerns, many of which can actually be implemented at a cost savings while also helping to create new jobs and improve economic productivity.

“With the right political and financial support energy-efficient lighting and cleaner coal technologies offer tremendous promise for Asia’s energy needs and economic future,” said Carduner. “Now is the time for action, since it will become much more costly to take action in the future.”

The USAID paper is a call for action, said Dr. Weerawat Chantanakome, executive director of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Centre for Energy. “This report should provide encouragement for Asian leaders to make critical investments in clean energy that will provide a big payback over the next 25 years. The ASEAN Centre for Energy, the Asian Development Bank, USAID and other partners are seeking possibilities to promote the right financing and policy incentives to help make clean energy the ‘next big thing’ in Asia,” he said.

The report identifies and prioritizes the most effective and economically viable solutions for the region to respond to the challenges ahead. The most promising strategies to save energy and reduce emissions include: using energy-efficient lighting and appliances; improving the efficiency of coal-burning power plants; harnessing onshore wind-generated power; using biomass-generated electricity; capturing methane from coal mining and municipal landfills; switching to biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, for transportation; and improving vehicle fuel efficiency.

From Ideas to Action: Clean Energy Solutions for Asia to Address Climate Change was prepared as part of USAID’s Environmental Cooperation-Asia Clean Development and Climate Program (ECO-Asia CDCP). It was prepared with input from over 200 experts and officials from Asia and the United States.

Electronic copies of the report as well as additional information about the ECO-Asia program are available at <http://usaid.eco-asia.org/programs/cdcp/>.