

May 18, 2018

Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister
Mr. Taro Aso, Minister of Finance
Mr. Taro Kono, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry
Mr. Masaharu Nakagawa, Minister of Environment
Mr. Akira Kondoh, Governor, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)
Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka, President, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Mr. Kazuhiko Bando, Chairman and CEO, Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI)

Re: Japanese Government Must Stop Financing the Cirebon and Indramayu Coal-fired Power Plants, West Java, Indonesia

Dear Mr. Abe, Mr. Aso, Mr. Kono, Mr. Seko, Mr. Nakagawa, Mr. Kondoh, Mr. Kitaoka, and Mr. Bando:

The undersigned groups from across the world are writing to express our strong support for the Indonesian community in Cirebon and Indramayu, West Java, who have never given up and have kept their efforts to protect their life and environment from the Japan-backed dirty coal projects. The Japanese government must respect the community's continuous opposition shown in various ways, including protest actions and lawsuits, despite serious human rights violations against them. We call on JBIC and NEXI not to support the expansion of the Cirebon coal-fired power plant (1,000 MW) anymore, and JICA to reject the loan for the expansion of the Indramayu coal-fired power plant (1,000 MW).

We have been deeply concerned about the role that Japan has been playing in pushing through the construction of new coal-fired power plants abroad, even after the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 and entered into force in 2016.

The discrepancy between rapid de-carbonization of the energy sector globally and Japan's policy to continuously export "efficient" coal-fired power plants is stark. For example, Japanese public financiers, namely JBIC and NEXI, and Japanese commercial banks decided last year to support the re-expansion of the Tanjung Jati B coal-fired power plants (2,000 MW) in Central Java, and the said expansion of the Cirebon coal-fired power plant, after French commercial banks withdrew from the bank consortiums for both projects in line with their commitments to reduce coal finance. This has been followed by the just recent decision of JBIC and Japanese commercial banks to finance the expansion of the Nghi Son coal-fired power plants (1,200 MW) in Thanh Hoa, Vietnam, last April, after British commercial bank's withdrawal from the bank consortium. Reportedly, Japan is planning to get involved in more new coal-fired power plants abroad, including projects in Myanmar, the Philippines, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Botswana, South Africa, and Egypt, aside from Indonesia and Vietnam.

Such funding of Japanese public and private banks for coal projects undermines global efforts to dramatically decrease carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. To fulfill the Paris Agreement long-term temperature goal, no new coal plants can be built. Japan as a signatory to the Paris Agreement must be responsible by changing its course immediately. Otherwise, Japan will likely face more severe international criticism.

The said coal plant projects in Cirebon and Indramayu have drawn international attention due to the continuously strong opposition of the local people. The affected residents have raised environmental and social concerns, such as adverse impacts on livelihood and health. In addition, the violations against the environmental and social guidelines (the Guidelines), which JBIC, NEXI and JICA own respectively, have been pointed out as described below.

Firstly, both projects entail legally fatal defects in their environmental permits. Each community filed administrative lawsuits, claiming that the permits for the projects were not appropriately issued by the local governments. The district court declared the cancellations of both environmental permits, respectively in April 2017 for the Cirebon case and in December 2017 for the Indramayu case.

Despite these verdicts in favor of the community, their struggles through litigation are still continuing. The Cirebon community has made an appeal to the High Court, after the district court rejected their demand or the cancellation of the 2nd environmental permit this month, which was issued without the awareness of the local community in July 2017. The Indramayu community has also made an appeal to the Supreme Court, after the rejection of their demand in the High Court in April 2018. JBIC, NEXI, and JICA must not provide any support for both projects, unless and until the final court decisions are confirmed. If the cancellations of the environmental permits are confirmed by legal decision, it will become clear that the projects violate their own Guidelines, which require “compliance with environmental laws of the host country” and “the submission of environmental permit certificates.” It must be also heeded that the supporting lawyers’ team and NGOs for the community’s lawsuits are warning that the current situation indicates that laws and regulations to protect the environment are becoming a dead letter, giving in to the interests of development.

Secondly, these ongoing legal cases are one of the clear forms showing the community’s continuous opposition against the said projects in Cirebon and Indramayu. It is obvious that no “social acceptability” for both projects has been secured, which the Guidelines require.

Thirdly, appropriate and effective measures to improve or at least restore the livelihoods of local farmers and fishermen are absent. For example, fishing nets provided by the project proponent are not effective to restore the small-scale fishermen’s livelihood in Cirebon, but rather have divided the local community or society. Likewise, livestock to be provided for the tenant farmers and daily farm labors will not replace the loss of farming land in Indramayu. Those programs are not the right solutions to the huge impact on the community’s livelihood. What the communities need are healthy coastal environments for fishing and fertile irrigated lands for farming. This is a clear violation of the Guidelines which stipulate that “The project proponents must make efforts to enable the people affected by the project to improve their standard of living, income opportunities, and production levels, or at least to restore them to pre-project levels.”

Finally, human rights violations against the vocal community members must not be neglected. Especially, the ongoing criminalization in Indramayu is an alarming situation. In December 2017, a few community members were wrongfully arrested by the local police and are still under suspect status even after their release. The other community members, including one of the plaintiffs in the said lawsuit, have been put in jail since last April. These incidents could cause the chilling effect, or could prevent the community from freely express their opinion in Cirebon as well as Indramayu. It is highly concerned that both projects could not ensure “meaningful participation of the affected people,” which is required by the Guidelines.

Last but not least, we would like to call your attention to the electricity reserve margins in the Java-Bali grid, which have already reached 32 percent surplus. According to the most recent government report, this figure could maintain at 29 percent by 2027. The electricity demand in 2017 for the entire Indonesia was only increasing with 3.57 % and was not consistent with the rate of economic growth, both rates of which were also far below the planning assumption. It is highly questionable if both projects in Cirebon and Indramayu are necessary, at the cost of local life and environment as well as global climate.

We again demand that the Japanese government does not provide any more support for the Cirebon and Indramayu coal-fired power plants. Japan must end its financing for coal projects and shift toward clean and sustainable renewable energy projects that will increase access to electricity without polluting local air and water or contributing to climate change.

Cc: Mr. Fumiya Kokubu, President & CEO, Marubeni Corporation
Mr. Yuji Kakimi, President, JERA Co., Inc.
Mr. Koji Fujiwara, President & CEO, Mizuho Bank, Ltd.
Mr. Makoto Takashima, President & CEO, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Mr. Kanetsugu Mike, President & CEO, MUFG Bank, Ltd.
Mr. Sung-soo Eun, Chairman & President, The Export-Import Bank of Korea
Mr. Ralph Hamers, CEO and chairman Executive Board, ING Group
Mr. Yuichi Hirasawa, Director Corporate Clients, ING Wholesale Banking in Japan

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

This letter is signed by 171 organizations, including those working at international and regional levels plus organizations working nationally in 40 countries.

INITIAL SIGNATORIES

Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI – FoE Indonesia)
WALHI West Java
Friends of the Earth Japan
Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES)
Kiko Network, Japan
350.org Japan

INDONESIAN ORGANISATIONS

350.org Indonesia
AEER (Aksi Ekologi dan Emansipasi Rakyat)
AKSI!- Indonesia
AURIGA Nusantara
Climate Rangers Cirebon
debtWATCH
Forum Aliansi Kedaulatan Rakyat
Jaringan Tanpa Asap Batu Bara Indramayu (JATAYU)
Jaringan Advokasi Tambang (JATAM)
Kanopi Bengkulu
Kelompok Nelayan Mekar Sari, Jepara

Koalisi Anti Utang
KRUHA (people's coalition for the right to water)
Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Bandung - YLBHI
PALAMUS (PECINTA ALAM MAHASISWA UNIVERSITAS SUBANG)
Rakyat Penyelamat Lingkungan (Rapel), Cirebon
Salam Institute
Sawit Watch
WALHI Bengkulu
WALHI Central Java
WALHI Jambi
WALHI Sumatera West

JAPANESE ORGANISATIONS

A SEED JAPAN
Becquerel Free Hokkaido
Fukuoka NGO forum on ADB
Greenpeace Japan
Japan Tropical Forest Action Network (JATAN)
Mekong Watch
Network for Indonesian Democracy, Japan (NINDJA)
No Nukes Asia Forum Japan
ODA reform network Kansai, Japan
Pacific Asia Resource Center (PARC)

REGIONAL AND/ OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL ORGANISATIONS

350.org East Asia
Asia-Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty (APNFS)
Asian Peasant Coalition (APC)
Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD)
Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA)
BankTrack
Centre for Environment
EKOenergy
Epikaizo Care Initiative
Focus on the Global South
Friends of the Earth International
Greenpeace Southeast Asia
International League of Peoples Struggle (ILPS)-Commission No. 6
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre
LDC Watch
Leave it in the Ground Initiative (LINGO)
Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)
Natural Resources Defense Council
NGO Forum on ADB
Oil Change International
Peoples Coalition for Food Sovereignty (PCFS)
Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition
South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)

Youth for Food Sovereignty (YFS)

NATIONAL-LEVEL ORGANISATIONS

Argentina

Amigos de la Tierra Argentina

Australia

350.org Australia

Friends of the Earth Australia

Market Forces

The Sunrise Project

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Jote

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

CLEAN (Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network)

Community Development Library (CDL)

EquityBD, Bangladesh

Nabodhara

National Federation of Hawkers –Bangladesh

Belgium

CNCD-11.11.11

11.11.11, Flemish Coalition North-South Movement

FairFin

Brazil

Friends of the Earth Brazil

Canada

Climate Action Network Canada

Climate Emergency Institute

Friends of the Earth Canada

Chile

Chile Sustentable Foundation

El Salvador

CESTA (FoE El Salvador)

Finland

Maan Ystävät Ry (FoE Finland)

France

Friends of the Earth France

Germany

BUND (FoE Germany)

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Ghana

Friends of the Earth Ghana

Honduras

Movimiento Madre Tierra (FoE Honduras)

Hungary

Clean Air Action Group

India

Adivasi Mulvasi Astitva Raksha manch

Environics Trust

Himalaya Niti Abhiyan

Indian Social Action Forum

Kerala Independent Fishworkers Federation

Nadi Gati Morcha

National Federation of Hawkers – India

National Federation of Women Hawkers- India

People's Alliance of Central-East India (PACE-India)

River Basin Friends

Malaysia

Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (FoE Malaysia)

Mongolia

Oyu Tolgoi Watch

Myanmar

EarthRights International

Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN)

Karen Rivers Watch

Mong Pan Youth Association

Myanmar Green Network

Nam Khone Alumni Network

Paung Ku

Nepal

All Nepal Peasants Federation

All Nepal Womens Association

Campaign for Climate Justice Nepal

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)

Human Rights Alliance

Jagaran Nepal

Rural Reconstruction Nepal

Netherlands

Both ENDS

Friends of the Earth Netherlands

New Zealand

The Renewables

Pakistan

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee

Palestine

Palestinian environmental NGOs Network (PENGON-FoE Palestine)

Philippines

350.org Pilipinas

AGHAM-Advocates of Science and Technology for the People

BAI Indigenous Women's Network

Bohol People's Art Development Center (BPADC)

Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP - Workers Solidarity Philippines)

Center for Environmental Concerns - Philippines

Central Visayas People's Network for Life and Environment (KINABUHI)

Cordillera Peoples Alliance

Farmers Development Center, Inc.

Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)

Gitib – Philippines

Hugpong sa Mag-uumang Bol-anon (HUMABOL or Federation of Boholano Farmers)

Institute for the Development of Educational and Ecological Alternatives, Inc. (IDEAS)

Kabatan-onan Para sa Kausaban sa Nasud (KAPAKANAN or Youth for Change)

Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE)

Katribu Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (Katribu)

Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC/FoE Philippines)

Philippine Laudato Si Advocates

Sandigan sa Bol-anong Kababayan-ang Nag-uuma ug Nanagat (SABAKAN)

Sanlakas - Philippines

Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance, Inc.

Save Sual Movement

The Network Opposed to Coal Power Plants in Southern Tagalog

Women's Development Center of Tagbilaran, Inc.

Russia

Sakhalin Environment Watch

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone School Green Club (SLSGC)

South Africa

Fossil Free South Africa

groundWork

South Korea

FoE South Korea / Korea Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM)

Solutions for Our Climate (SFOC)

Spain

Amigos de la Tierra (FoE Spain)

Sri Lanka

Center for Environmental Justice (CEJ)

Switzerland

fossil-free.ch

Pro Natura / FoE Switzerland

Zukunft statt Kohle

Taiwan

Mom Loves Taiwan Association

Thailand

Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand

Spirit in Education Movement

Togo

Les Amis de la Terre-Togo

United Kingdom

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Independent expert on fossil fuel subsidies

United States of America

Earth Ethics

Friends of the Earth United States

Turtle Island Restoration Network

Ulu Foundation

UU Congregation of Binghamton, NY Green Sanctuary

Uruguay

REDES-FoE Uruguay

Vietnam

The Law and Policy of Sustainable Development Research Center (LPSD)

Individuals

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