

NGOs' Recommendation on the Bangkok Statement on Renewable Energy

**26th March 2004
Bangkok, Thailand**

During the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific on renewable Energies 2004 on March 25-26 in Bangkok, hosted by the Thai Ministry of Energy and supported by the German Government, a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the areas of energy, environment, and sustainable development was invited to discuss energy related issues with representatives from the German Federal Deputy Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The NGOs represented were Alternative Energy for sustainability Project, Campaign for Alternative Industry Network, Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Health System Research Institute, Project for Ecological Recovery, and WWF-Thailand. Issues concerning the more utilization of renewable energies were raised and discussed. As a result of the meeting, the NGOs (hereinafter referred to as “we”) would like to push forward into writing what we expressed in order to effectively allow and promote the utilization of renewable energies. We hope that, due to a number of similarities across countries in Asia and the Pacific region, they are recognized and well incorporated into the outcome of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific on Renewable Energies 2004, which is the “Bangkok Statement”, as well as the International conference for Renewable Energies 2004 which will be held in Bonn.

We believe that:

- Renewable Energy is not an end in itself and it should not be viewed as an isolated energy issue, but rather, it is a significant means to achieve sustainable development and therefore must seriously and fully be incorporated into the other key issues, particularly poverty alleviation, public health, environmental protection, social integrity, and climate change.
- Effective and beneficial utilization and promotion of renewable energies must be done in a holistic manner by linking with and integrated into other development issues, such as water resources management, pollution control, and sustainable agricultural development. Also it must be considered in the context of addressing problems and inefficiencies of the existing policy as well as institutional energy and non-energy structures that have, in the past, prohibited access and widespread utilization of decentralized renewable energies or biased towards unsustainable use of other energy sources.
- The political centralization and the top-down policy formulation and implementation of the existing energy system must not be allowed for renewable energy development. Centralized and top-down renewable energy policy and projects must not be imposed on people and the society. Transparency and people's participation in the policy

process as well as good governance in projects' development and operation must be ensured.

- Renewable Energy is not only the business of private operators and industrial sector, especially large corporations and companies. All sectors in the society have their own roles and responsibilities in renewable energy development. Policy framework and investment promotion on renewable energy must ensure fair and open access to the decision making process, infrastructure, and resource for all stakeholders.
- We criticize the governments from the North that, while discussing ways to promote renewable energies, they put much resources and efforts to development of centralized conventional energy projects. We demand that these governments and multilateral financial agencies (such as the World Bank) phase out subsidies in various forms to centralized conventional energy projects as soon as possible.
- Renewable Energy is not expensive. Many renewable energy technologies are already able to compete with the conventional energy technologies and many more are coming close to commercial viability. The conventional energy seems to be cheaper only without externality costs. When taking the environment, social, and health aspects into account, renewable energy is by far cheaper and providing much more benefits to the society.
- Prioritizing renewable energy development is the collective decision-making by the society. Therefore, social mobilization must be strengthened in order to raise awareness and push the governments and the private sector.
- Renewable energy initiatives from local levels around the world must be fully supported by all stakeholders with sufficient resources. Particularly in the cases of conflicts in centralized conventional energy projects, the issue must be seriously taken into account.
- Sustainable development needs both renewable energy, and energy efficiency and conservation. A substantial share of renewable energy can only be achieved if, at the same time, energy saving and prudence in consumption and generation is improved. Therefore, renewable energy and energy efficiency and conservation policy and measures should go hand in hand.