



Building a New Paradigm on Energy
Social Democratic Response to the Challenge of Nuclear Phase Out and Energy Security
July 22-24, 2013 – Tokyo, Japan

Background

In the previous century, a general belief in the optimality of nuclear technology (as a source of power generation) and deep anxieties over energy security (in light of precarious fluctuations in hydrocarbon supply) encouraged many countries to aggressively invest in and pursue nuclear option.

Shortly after U.S.' President Eisenhower 'Atom for Peace' speech (1953), marking the beginning of a global nuclear era, major countries embraced the technology as a supposedly reliable, safe, and clean source of energy – a trend that was followed across the developing world as well as a number of communist countries in Europe and Asia. The 'oil shocks' in the 1970s and the 1980s further raised concerns over the stability and predictability of the global supply of oil, which, in turn, reinforced the imperative, at least in the minds of leaders at the time, to rely on supposedly sound source of energy, i.e. nuclear technology – despite all its negative association with weapons of mass destruction and military adventurism. As a result, there was an element of 'nuclear renaissance' in the late-1970s and 1980s, with 233 reactors under construction globally and 50 in the U.S. alone in that specific period.

However, a series of tragic nuclear accidents, notably the 'three mile island' incident (1979) and the Chernobyl meltdown (1986), tarnished this relentless push for nuclear technology – forcing many countries to reconsider the wisdom of their pro-nuclear policy paradigm. Soon, Asian countries such as the Philippines began to revisit their large-scale nuclear projects, quickly discovering the myriad of safety, technical, and financial burdens inherent to the nuclear industry. As a result, from a high of 233 reactors under construction in the 1970s and 1980s, recent years have seen only 64 reactors under construction.

Historically, only a few countries, especially Japan, South Korea, Russia, USA, France, and Germany, have actually dominated the technology. Due to its inherently tricky economic and financial configuration, namely the lack of economies of scale, the huge front-up, operating and maintenance costs (generally several times the original estimate,) as well as the costs of nuclear phase-out, especially in its initial stages of development, and other associated complications with waste disposal and safety, the nuclear industry has by necessity been a primarily state-dominated industry, artificially sustained by subsidies – putting its feasibility and operational rationale under question. In spite of the huge strides in technology, nuclear waste disposal remains to be an unsolved challenge, a huge financial burden and environmental risk to this day, while the estimated overall emissions of a 'full nuclear cycle' – from mining uranium, to nuclear enrichment, and conversion of the enriched stockpile into fuel, followed by the disposal of radioactive waste - has been far from 'carbon-neutral'.

Thus, countries such as Germany – in response to growing social pressure for adopting alternative renewable energy (RE), plus a huge scientific-policy collaboration and emerging consensus on diversifying energy resources away from nuclear technology – paved the way for a ‘green revolution’ of seismic global significance -- placing the industrial giant of Germany at the forefront of renewable energy research, development and innovation. Yet, the myth of nuclear technology as a panacea to energy security for sustained economic expansion continued to edge forward, especially among emerging economies. The year 2011, however, marked a decisive shift in nuclear technology. The tragic nuclear meltdown in Fukushima not only revealed a profound regulatory-transparency deficit within the Japanese energy bureaucracy, but it also severely eroded the general confidence in nuclear technology – engendering a deep sense of anxiety in the public, while pushing many governments to review their nuclear policies or simply shut down existing (or nascent) power plants all together. But, in another twist to the nuclear saga, the following years witnessed resurgence in pro-nuclear lobbying – with foreign corporations, together with hawkish policy-makers, playing a critical role in some cases -- across the world, but most especially in Asia and other emerging economies.

Against this particular backdrop, social democrats are once again facing the renewed challenge of debunking the ‘nuclear myth’ and ensuring that governments, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, are responsive to not only a whole body of scientific literature underscoring the paucity of the nuclear option, but, more importantly, a growing public outcry against the excessive and unsustainable costs associated with nuclear technology – and of course its huge environmental and humanitarian risks.

Key Objectives

1. The conference aims to supplement and consolidate the outcomes of two previous conferences conducted by the Network of Social Democracy in Asia (SOCDEM Asia) which focused along the lines of developing a new paradigm of development that integrates social, ecological and economic dimensions to its framework. In these conferences social democrats of Asia and Europe agreed that a progressive response to the energy question is integral in pushing for an alternative developmental framework.
2. It aims to reemphasize and further substantiate the argument that nuclear technology is no longer (and hardly ever have been) a viable option for ensuring energy security, especially in light of the Fukushima meltdown and the overall systemic problems inherent to the nuclear industry, ranging from cost-financial impracticality, regulatory capture and secrecy, dual-use security risks, and most importantly huge environmental risks vis-à-vis waste-disposal and potential meltdown in an event of an unexpected natural or/and industrial accidents.
3. Develop a progressive energy outlook, to harness sustainable energy mix/sources, while clarifying and critically assessing variable costs and challenges associated with energy policy reformulation
4. Tackle nuclear technology within the broader context of energy security as a global and a local issue of tremendous significance – and the necessity to develop multi-level collaboration to address challenges associated with a sustainable energy paradigm.
5. Closely examine the challenges, the actual and estimated costs of nuclear phase-out, and to explore practicable, transitional policy regimes/measures aimed at advocating a decisive shift from a nuclear-dominated paradigm towards a more RE-oriented one, with special focus on the cases of Sweden, Germany, the Philippines and Japan.
6. Overall, the conferences aims to contribute to shaping social democratic energy policy, draw observations and provide recommendations from the Fukushima experience, draw lessons from successful nuclear phase-out programs and renewable energy models, and strategize energy security agenda

Information about the organizers

	<p>The Network of Social Democracy in Asia (www.socdem.asia) is a loose group of political parties, pre-party formations, trade unions, progressive politicians, scholars and activists in the region who share social democratic values and perspectives. The Network provides a channel for inter- and transnational sharing of discourses, experiences and best practices among progressives and social democrats in Asia.</p>
	<p>The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a private, not-for-profit, public interest cultural-political-educational foundation committed to the ideals and basic values of social democracy. It was founded in 1925—the first of its kind in Germany—as a political legacy of Germany’s first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert. The FES has its headquarters in Germany and currently maintains branch offices and projects in more than 90 countries. Its work in Asia is focused on the promotion of international dialogue—within Asia, and between Asia and Europe— on democracy and the strengthening of social and ecological dimensions of economic development through education, research, and international cooperation.</p>
	<p>Through party-oriented democracy support, the Social Democratic party of Sweden and the Palme Center support sister parties throughout the world. This is done in nations that already have struggling democracies as well as in dictatorships such as Belarus and Zimbabwe. The efforts focus on training for party leaders and party members, organizational development, and the sharing of knowledge and experience. Our strength is the understanding of the role that popular movements’ play in democratization. Such strength has supported the organizing of people wanting to achieve changes through which can all benefit. Such experience provides unique opportunities to support others.</p>

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Program Schedule:

July 21, 2013 – Sunday (Day 00)

AM – PM - Arrival
7:00 PM - Welcome Dinner

July 22, 2013 – Monday (Day 01)

8:00 AM - Departure to Fukushima from the hotel by bus
11:00 AM - Arrival in Koriyama, Fukushima
11:00-1:00 PM - Field Visits
1:00 – 4:00 PM - Lunch and Roundtable Discussion with **Mr. Eisaku Sato**, former Governor of the Prefecture Fukushima and NGO Representatives
4:00 – 7:00 PM - Travel back to Tokyo
8:00 – 9:00 PM - Dinner

July 23, 2013 – Tuesday (Day 02)

8:00 – 8:30 AM - Registration
8:30 – 9:00 AM - Conference Opening

MP Mizuho Fukushima

Member of the House of Councillors of Japan (Social Democratic Party)

Mr. Berthold Leimbach

Resident Representative, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Philippines

Dr. Sven Saaler

Resident Representative, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Japan

Mrs. Ann Linde

Head of International Policy Unit, Party of European Socialists

9:00 – 10:30 AM -

The Social Democratic Response to the Challenge of Energy Security without Nuclear

Keynote Address: Fukushima and its Consequences- The Need to Build a New Paradigm on Energy

MP Tomoko Abe

Member of the House of Representatives of Japan (Green Wind)

The Best Way of Phasing-Out for Southeast Asia is Not to start with Nuclear Energy

MP Charles Santiago

Democratic Action Party, Malaysia

10:30 – 11:00 AM -

Coffee/Tea Break

11:00 – 12:00 PM -

Open Forum

12:00 – 1:30 PM -

Lunch

1:30 – 1:45 PM -

Video Presentation on the Fukushima Tragedy

1:45 – 4:00 PM -

Phasing Out Nuclear – How Short and Far Can Things Get Done?

The session looks at all the inherent problems with the nuclear industry, and how this necessitates a meticulous but irreversible 'phase out plan'. It also aims to identify the costs and practical consideration embedded in a comprehensive nuclear phase out plan, fleshing out key measures and policy consideration for its implementation. Specifically, it looks at the experience of Germany, which has been at the forefront of 'nuclear phase out' (and energy diversification in recent years), Japan, which is currently locked in an intense national debate over shutting down all nuclear plants after the Fukushima incident, and Sweden, which has had some notable twist and turns in its nuclear energy policy, reflecting the ebbs and flows of its domestic political dynamics.

Key Questions:

- *What has the Fukushima incident taught us?*
- *Is nuclear phase out an option?*
- *What are the successful models of nuclear phase out?*
- *What can the Asia-Pacific region learn from these experiences?*
- *What are the challenges ahead?*
- *What is the current debate and trends especially in Germany and Japan over this issue?*

MEP Jo Leinen

Member of European Parliament, Social Democratic Party of Germany

Ms. Akiko Yoshida

Friends of Earth Japan

MP Peter Jeppsson

Social Democratic Party of Sweden

Ms. Maria Teresa Diokno-Pascual

Board Member, Freedom from Debt Coalition, Philippines

4:00 – 4:30 PM - Coffee/Tea Break

4:30 – 6:00 PM - **The Potential of Renewables in Asia as a Post-Fukushima Prescription**

The session looks at the rationale for diversifying towards Renewable Energy (RE), especially in light of the Fukushima incident (and earlier nuclear disasters) as well as precarious fluctuations and uncertainties in the hydrocarbon markets. Specifically, it looks at the experience of different countries, which, at varying levels, invested in developing RE with considerable success. It evaluates whether rapid industrialization (or sustaining high levels of productivity) could coincide with 'nuclear phase out' and a sustained focus on expanding the role of RE in the overall energy mix.

Key Questions:

- *Why do we need REs?*
- *What are the current trends and developments in the RE sector?*
- *How viable are REs in ensuring energy security and economic productivity?*
- *What is the experience of East Asia in Res, in Europe?*
- *What are the major challenges in developing REs as the core of our energy mix?*

Mr. John West

Research Associate, York Centre for Asian Research, York University
Visiting Senior Fellow, University of Wollongong

Prof. Lee Pil Ryul
Korea National Open University

Reactors:

MP Arif Budimanta
Indonesia

Mrs. Ann Linde
Head of International Policy Unit, Party of European Socialists

6:00 – 7:00 PM - Open Forum

7:30 PM - Dinner

July 24, 2013 – Wednesday (Day 03)

9:00 – 10:30 AM - **Panel Presentation:**
Creating Inroads into Energy Security and Sustainability

The session looks at a more specific and technical overview of the challenges of transitioning from more conventional and traditional sources of energy (i.e., fossil fuels and nuclear technology) towards REs. It looks at the specific experiences of European countries as well as industrialized Asian countries such as Japan, which have sought to achieve greater energy security by shifting the composition of their energy mix in favor of REs. Specifically, it analyzes the confluence of policy ingredients, resource endowments, and regulatory reforms, which could contribute to the rapid development of REs as the core source of energy, both within the industrialized as well as industrializing countries in East Asia.

Key Questions:

- *What are the prerequisites to transitioning towards a RE-centered political economy?*
- *What can we learn from the experiences of Germany, and other successful countries?*
- *What is the state of REs in Japan?*
- *How has the Fukushima incident affected Japan's push for REs?*
- *What are the major challenges to diversifying energy resources in Europe and industrialized Asian countries?*
- *What is a realistic RE roadmap for developing economies in the East Asia?*

MEP Jo Leinen

Member of European Parliament, Social Democratic Party of Germany

Dr. Dusmanta Kumar Giri

Secretary General, Association for Democratic Socialism, India

MP Myeong Sook Han

Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Democratic Party

MP Shoichi Kondo

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)

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| 10:30 – 10:45 AM - | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 10:45 – 11:30 AM - | Open Forum |
| 11:30 – 12:00 PM - | Conference Synthesis and Closing |
| 12:00 – 1:00 PM - | Lunch |
| 1:00 PM - | Departures |

Master of Ceremonies - Ms. Marie Chris Cabrerros