

Headline: Climate groups urge Kepco to stop coal power projects in PH

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Different local and Asian non-government organizations protested the new coal power plants and coal investments of the Korea Electric Power Corporation (Kepco) in the Philippines, as the company held its Annual Shareholders Meeting in South Korea.

Members of the Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD), Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ), women's group Oriang, Sanlakas, Koalisyon Pabahay ng Pilipinas (KPP), and the Metro Manila Vendors' Association (MMVA) held a rally in front of Kepco's Makati office.

"Financiers of coal projects, the dirtiest among the fossil fuels that largely cause climate change, must be taken to task for their critical roles in climate change," APMDD's Lidy Nacpil said in a joint statement on Wednesday.

"Asia's dirty companies such as Kepco must heed the world-wide clamor to put an end to coal energy," she added.

PMJC Coordinator Ian Rivera said the company's direction contradicts previous statements of South Korean President Moon Jae-in, wherein he committed to the country's transition to a low-carbon economy.

"Kepco, whose 51.11% shares is owned by the South Korean government, should follow their country leader's declaration and change their company's energy and financing policies," Rivera said.

On its website, Kepco said it has two coal power projects in the country — the Cebu CFBC Power Plant, and the Naga Power Plant Complex, both located in the city of Naga in Cebu.

The company claims that they are utilizing a "clean coal technology" in its projects, which according to them is compliant with environment requirements such as the local Clean Air Act and the World Bank standards.

"Emissions from facilities using this globally accepted technology have been proven — by over 1,300 CFBC units operating around the world — to be very well within the limitations set by the Clean Air Act," Kepco said in its website.

"The injection of limestone into the combustor significantly reduces sulfur (SOx) emission while the formation of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions is reduced, if not eliminated, due to the low combustion temperature of 850-900 OC," it added.

However, according to Sanlakas Secretary General Aaron Pedrosa, there were no changes in Kepco's stance and has continued to fund coal projects despite international talks.

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"It is extremely disappointing that three years since the 2015 Paris Agreement when nearly 200 nations pledged to limit global temperature increase to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, Kepco has not made significant changes to prevent catastrophic climate change," Pedrosa said.

"Climate change-related disasters are becoming more frequent and more severe, destroying cities and more so vulnerable communities that have no infrastructure support and adaptive communities," Rivera added. /muf