

PRESS RELEASE

Asian Civil Society Groups Call for “Climate Justice”

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BANGKOK (July 16) - Over 170 activists who gathered in Bangkok over the weekend harshly criticised governments and corporations for their failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They called for “climate justice” and a “fundamental departure from the current global order” to solve the climate crisis. Conference participants included fishers and farmers, forest and indigenous peoples, women, youth, workers and non-government activists from 31 countries.

“By climate justice,” participants asserted in a conference document, “we mean that the burden of adjustment to the climate crisis must be borne by those who have created it, and not by those who have been least responsible.”

The conference signalled the growing voice of social movements and civil society groups in Asia on the issue of climate change.

Throughout the three-day conference, participants repeatedly expressed frustration at how governments and corporations, who have thus far dominated the climate discussion, have failed to address the root causes of planet-threatening climate change.

After over 30 workshops and plenary debates, participants reached consensus on their opposition to carbon trading and “offset” schemes, such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Development (REDD) program, which allow polluters to buy their way out of reducing emissions.

Participants also rejected industrialized agrofuels, megadams, and nuclear power, saying these “false solutions” will “merely exacerbate the climate crisis and deepen global inequality.”

As a solution, participants insisted that governments must confront the problem of overconsumption, both in developed countries as well as among elites in poorer countries.

The conference heard that while industrialized countries have been responsible for about 90% of historical greenhouse gas emissions, 99% of the risks posed climate change are being borne by people from developing countries.

“Dealing with the climate crisis inevitably involves a fundamental departure from the current global order, and a comprehensive transformation of social, economic, political and cultural relations at the local, national, and global level,” participants concluded.

The conference was hosted by Focus on the Global South, a policy and advocacy group housed at Bangkok’s Chulalongkorn University, together with 24 other co-organizers from around the world. The majority of participants came from Asian countries, but there were also representatives from North America, Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

For more information about the conference, go to :

www.focusweb.org/climatechange