

# ASEAN seeks cooperation on energy

At Manila meeting, bloc expresses willingness to seek solutions for collaboration on renewables, liquefied natural gas

By **WILLA WU** and **DARA WANG**  
in Manila

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has called for extensive global cooperation in regional energy development, Alfonso Cusi, the Philippines' energy secretary, said on Sept 28.

ASEAN is willing to discuss all exploitation solutions that will benefit the region as well as the world in the fields of renewable energy and liquefied natural gas development, he said.

Cusi told *China Daily* that the bloc's member countries had agreed to draw up a memorandum of understanding in order to build a platform for continued collaboration and on how to advance renewable energy development.

He made the remarks in Manila on the second day of the 35th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting

(AMEM35) and associated meetings. The Philippines was the rotational host country.

As long as it leads to a win-win solution, the Philippines welcomes every kind of cooperation in gas exploration with China as well as other ASEAN member countries, Cusi said during a press conference, in reply to a question from *China Daily* on marine natural gas exploitation.

He added that ASEAN member states stressed the key role of natural gas in the region's sustainable growth and the need to implement the long-term goal of an open market in the region.

The AMEM35 and associated meetings — themed One ASEAN Community Through Resilient and Sustainable Energy — were held from Sept 27 to 29.

It is an annual gathering of energy ministers from the 10 ASEAN member countries, as well as ASEAN's

partner countries that include China, Japan and South Korea through the ASEAN+3 cooperation mechanism.

The meetings offer a platform to share progress in the development of the region's energy sector, as well as seek guidance, direction and inspiration in intensifying cooperation in the energy sector.

During the meetings, energy deals were signed, studies on energy development were presented, and cooperation possibilities discussed.

On the first day, the Energy Purchase and Wheeling Agreement (EPWA) was signed by the heads of the electric utilities of Laos, Thailand and Malaysia.

The deal is the first multilateral electricity transaction in ASEAN that aims to advance electricity trade in the ASEAN Power Grid.

During the AMEM35 opening ceremony on Sept 27, Cusi, in his keynote speech, highlighted that renewable energy as well as liquefied

natural gas are two major energy supplies of the future.

The country's energy chief noted that renewables had gradually become an indispensable energy source today, while the future relies on "sustainable, affordable and competitive" renewable energy.

He also praised China for leading the way in the renewables sector, which is growing faster than fossil fuels and nuclear, adding that ASEAN should team up with China in intensifying renewable energy development.

Adnan Amin, director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency, told *China Daily* that China, when cooperating with ASEAN on renewable energy, could take on the role of technology provider. This is because China leads in technology and innovation, he said, and due to its cutting-edge systems for transmission of renewables.

The Philippines is the world's second-largest producer of geothermal

energy, while Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam excel in hydropower.

In addition, Cusi pointed out that liquefied natural gas is the bridging fuel in the short to medium term before the use of renewable energy enters a mature stage.

China and ASEAN countries have increasing demand for gas, while the United States will be transformed into a net exporter and become a disruptive factor to the market, Cusi said.

Citing estimates by the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, Cusi said ASEAN countries will be net importers of liquefied natural gas — requiring 20 million tons by 2021 and at least 45 million tons in 2030.

He urged the members of ASEAN+3 to be prepared to focus on energy security.

Contact the writers at  
willa@chinadailyhk.com and  
dara@chinadailyhk.com

## Villagers reap rewards of relocation

New settlements in Tibet built for people from isolated impoverished areas also offer abundant job opportunities

By **HOU LIQIANG** and **DAQIONG**  
in Chushul, Tibet autonomous region

Shopping for daily necessities used to be a luxury for Pasang Drolma. The nearest store was in a town 30 kilometers away, and she only had the time to make the journey twice a year.

As no public buses ran through her isolated village in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, to get there she would have to wait beside a dirt road for up to an hour to flag down a private minibus or taxi service.

That was until the end of last year, however, before the 46-year-old mother moved to Duishigagyi, a new village in Chushul county built specially to give impoverished families a fresh start.

So far, 365 households — roughly 1,700 people — have been resettled in the area as part of an ongoing poverty-alleviation program. Residents enjoy convenient public transportation links, and "now we live in a spacious and much more comfortable new house", Pasang Drolma said.

Pure Land, a regional government-sponsored agricultural project nearby, has also provided a range of employment opportunities.

Due to unfavorable weather and soil conditions in their old village, Pasang Drolma and her husband had barely been able to grow enough



**Pasang Drolma**, 46, works on a farm near Duishigagyi, a newly built village in Chushul county, in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region. The farm is part of the government-backed Pure Land project. HOU LIQIANG / CHINA DAILY

grain to feed themselves. The family's only income was the 7,000 yuan (\$1,070) a year their eldest son made working as a restaurant waiter in Lhasa, the regional capital.

Pasang Drolma and her youngest son now earn 100 yuan a day doing farmwork at Pure Land. "We don't have to work every day, we just work when we want," she said. "We made

more than 10,000 yuan in the first half of this year."

The regional government started the Pure Land project in 2013. The area produces maca, a root vegetable native to the South American Andes; snow chrysanthemum, which is used mainly for tea; organic grapes, peaches and roses; ingredients for traditional Tibetan medicine; organ-

ic meat, and dairy products.

"The industry was brought in before people were relocated to the area," said Sonam Yangkyi, a village cadre in Duishigagyi. "All the resettled families have at least one person who can work, so they benefit from the industry."

China's growing demand for organic products and traditional

Tibetan medicine has proved good news for the agricultural project, which is in a clean, high-altitude environment.

"One kilogram of ordinary peaches only sells for about 30 yuan, but a single peach from the Pure Land zone can sell for a high price," Sonam Yangkyi said.

Last year, the project created 127,500 jobs and increased the per capita income in Duishigagyi by about 6,000 yuan, according to the village committee, which did not provide the actual income figure. It added that the 89 enterprises with operations in the zone had a combined output of 3.7 billion yuan.

Duishigagyi was one of 353 new settlements built in Tibet last year to relocate 77,000 people from isolated areas, with most next to industrial developments to ensure abundant job opportunities, according to Lu Huadong, deputy director of the Tibet Poverty Alleviation Office.

A further 450 new villages with room for 163,000 people were also planned this year, as the region looks to build a comprehensively well-off society by 2020, he added.

Most of the people being resettled live in high, cold areas with limited resources, a fragile ecology and a severe prevalence of Kaschin-Beck disease, a chronic bone condition. Relocation is usually the only way to escape poverty.