

Opening Remarks for
The 4th Northeast Asia Energy Security Forum

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Mr. Taeho Lee, Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bambang Hermawanto, Chairman of ASEAN Power Grid Consultative Committee, distinguished experts, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today to offer some opening remarks. I would like to begin by first expressing my gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its continuing partnership with ESCAP and holding this series of dialogues on energy cooperation in North-East Asia. I also appreciate representatives and experts from all the key energy institutions in North-East Asia for joining this forum.

Today, we are holding the 4th Forum with a particular focus on power interconnection. As you are well aware, power interconnection at the multilateral level has been discussed during last 20 years. Unlike many other regions, such discussions have been far from coming to fruition. Now North-East Asia finally arrives at the juncture of realizing the idea of connecting countries with grid. In recent years, governments, power companies and research institutions have come forward with various initiatives such as “Asia Super Grid”,

“Northeast Asia Super Grid”, “Global Energy Interconnection”, and “East Asia Super Energy Ring”. In support of these initiatives, power companies have also stated conducting joint feasibility studies on power interconnection and business evaluation studies from 2016. However, realizing these initiatives requires an intergovernmental platform that would facilitate dialogues on legal, technical and economic conditions, support technical studies, align national policies and regulations, and promote renewable energy development and integration. In this connection, we have presented identifying potential arrangements of multilateral and multistakeholder cooperation as a key goal of this Forum.

Distinguished participants,

Power interconnection in other parts of the world prove various benefits such as lowering electricity production costs, increasing the quality and reliability of electricity service, reducing the level of required reserve capacity, and improving national energy security. In addition to those benefits, all the proposed initiatives have significant implications for the environment, and regional cooperation and integration.

Now many cities in the subregion experience heavy levels of air pollution. And North-East Asian countries are collectively responsible for most than one-third of global greenhouse gases emissions. Proposals of power interconnection give us the greater opportunity to address these local and global challenges as they promote utilizing

cleaner and greener sources of electricity. In this connection, realizing power interconnections based on renewables will significantly contribute to attaining the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Let me turn to the benefit of regional cooperation and integration. North-East Asian countries have a very high level of interactions in terms of trade, investment, tourists, overseas students, and many others. However, unlike high interactions in such areas, physical connectivity is relatively weak, in particular, cross-border energy infrastructure, including power interconnection. Power interconnection is not just a trade of goods. It is a key trigger of confidence-building among the connected countries and a key contributor to regional cooperation and integration. Thus, the current proposals for power interconnection should not just stay as a topic of energy community, but go beyond this community.

ESCAP has a strong mandate from member countries to promote sustainable energy as well as energy access and energy connectivity. In this connection, we will make our best efforts to be an effective catalyst and to strengthen subregional cooperation on power connection

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