

GREEN TRANSITION IN LABOR' PERSPECTIVE

Labor' perspective in energy transition

As we can see from the mainstream approach in the energy transition agenda, it is obvious that the focus has been more on protecting the economic value instead of the community. This results in inequality in the protection of labor force and the ecosystem. Energy transition should be an instrument to ease society, not an instrument for the monopoly of private interests. We have to be cautious about the risk that energy transition could be used for the said monopoly rather than communal benefits.

Energy transition is not new concept. However, we need to criticize this transition should be fair and beneficial for all people, not only for few interests. Downstream policy in Indonesia should be committed in the communal advantage and national interest, it should not only encourage energy transition and increase economic activity on mineral extraction. It is necessary to consider the broader economic and social implication in energy transition.

The current narrative on energy transition tends to be oriented toward market economy which can be beneficial for big corporations. The labor movement should pay a critical attention on the energy transition agenda through downstream policies of the mining industry. The mainstream narrative provides and facilitates investment benefitting corporation, but it might disadvantage workers in the context of labor market flexibility. Therefore, it is important for us to keep questioning whether the energy transition agenda is in line with the broader social welfare goal.

Energy transition is driven by business interests and big corporations. As a result, it creates dependence on technology and capital and encourages an extractive-oriented model of economic growth. Workers need to reconsider their political positions on the energy transition agenda. They should support an alternative development agenda which focuses on the environment and justice for workers. The main objective of energy transition should be green and fair production by restoring the often-marginalized rights of workers.

Impact of energy transition and downstream policy for workers

The problem of energy transition is inevitably connected to the role of labor movement. Our discussion so far has shown its substantive impacts. Previously, we did not fully comprehend that energy transition agenda has direct consequences for workers' livelihood, especially women workers' who have been impacted by polluted air from energy transition processes.

Further, participation in policymaking process on the transition is not transparent, ignoring possible risks and negative impacts experienced by affected communities.

We should be concerned that energy transition is not a given-process without consequences. There are inequalities in land ownership structure and power domination in society which influence this process. Primitive accumulation contributes to the current environmental impacts that we are experiencing. We should remember that if the state does not manage energy transition in accordance to its needs, it will interrupt its energy sovereignty. For instance, in Jakarta, the government's effort to reduce air pollution have affected working conditions for workers such as the arrangement of working hours and shifts that might affect their livelihood. Transition energy agenda have resulted in changes in the manufacture and mineral processing industry, which have several implications for workers. Transition in vehicle production, from internal combustion engine to EV battery/electric, has an impact on the shift to new machine, hence encouraging the efficiency of the workforce. Meanwhile, in the mineral processing industry, workersface challenges such as low wages for working overtime and uncertain labor relations. In this context, welfare and safety protection is also a problem that must be tackled seriously.

Workers have experienced some impacts as a result of the hijacking of energy transition agenda. For example, the standardization of green products or sustainability products have encouraged companies to implement automation through massive digitalization process in production. In mineral-processing industry, mineral workers do not have welfare protection. It is true that mineral workers have wage above the minimum wage standard. However, companies set working-hours as "all-in", meaning that it is a combination between regular working-hours and overtime without overtime fee. Consequently, working relations status for the workers are still the same such as contract-based agreement and outsourcing agreements, among others. There is no future in terms of the certainty of social protection and rights. Moreover, health and safety standards at the working space, are neither adequate nor up to the required standards of health.

Labor demands infair energy transition agenda

Downstream policies on energy tend to focus on the electricity sector at the expense of other energy sources. Fossil fuel energy, which produces significant environmental damage, is often controlled by big countries lacking their own energy resources. Petrochemicals and other strategic sectors are often in the hands of powerful interests too. In this situation, it seems that Indonesia has not fully benefitted from exploiting its own natural resources. There is a general sense that energy transition is led to the protection of interest, with little benefits for average Indonesians.

On the other hand, the other side of this story shows that there are opportunities for Indonesia to change its political direction in the context of energy transition. We can question and resist

the politics of monopoly with our strong determination and sovereignty. There is a space for Indonesia to be an opponent of monopoly capitalism and consider alternative, fairer, and more sustainable solutions. We have to take roles to bridge the gap between environmental awareness and aspiration for fair transition, with active involvement from labor unions.

For the labor movement, energy transition agenda remains an urgent necessity in response to the global climate crisis due to the extractive development model that has been implemented for so long. Hence, it is crucial for the labor movement to offer an alternative vision for a fair energy transition. This vision should be based on common interests, rooted in participatory processes from society to alter the structure of access, ownership, production, distribution, and its existing advantage. Labour movement should get actively involved in exploration and research about democracy in the context of energy transition. Therefore, we are able to design an energy transition agenda which is not only sustainable for environment, but also socially and economically just.

Labor demands in energy transition:

1. Legal and social protection in the process of a fair, sustainable and prosperous energy transition
2. Dissemination of comprehensive information regarding energy transition
3. Promoting a full and meaningful participation of the people for energy transition
4. Upskilling for workers who might be replaced by machines and digitalization and protection for the workers
5. Pushing the government to enforce laws and regulations for companies that violate the energy transition principle
6. Promoting labor politics and policy, which has been eliminated in the neoliberal Omnibus Law on Job Creation, in order to achieve regulations for labour protection, wage concessions, pro-labor working agreements, or democratization through labor share in companies
7. Strengthening the international network and capacity and knowledge building for all workers.

Drafting Team:

1. KPR - kprbpn@gmail.com
2. KASBI - penguruspusat@kasbi.or.id
3. FPBI - infopusat.fpbi@gmail.com
4. Transnational Institute - r.hertanti@tni.org
5. Hints - SahitaInstitute@gmail.com
6. Trend Asia - info@trendasia.org
7. LIPS - info@lips.or.id