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Asia plays pivotal role in driving innovation, sustainability for energy transition

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BANGI: Asia plays a pivotal role in driving innovation and sustainable growth for the energy transition, said Petroliaam Nasional Bhd (Petronas) vice president of corporate sustainability Charlotte Wolff-Bye yesterday.

She said there was a critical need for global collaboration to accelerate the energy transition.

"We talked about climate change, and this is not a core competence of the oil and gas sector. Clearly, we must collaborate across sectors — with academia, not-for-profit organisations, and also across borders.

"It's very clear that this is a global issue and a global opportunity. So we must work together," she told reporters at a media outreach programme on energy transition and sustainability yesterday.

Wolff-Bye was responding to a question on the importance of cooperation between China and Malaysia, as well as China and Asean, in the energy transition.

She said China had a critical role to play — not only as the world's largest emitter of carbon emissions, but also as a country with some of the greatest opportunities in decarbonisation.

"Of course, so much innovation and good-scale economics are coming out of China, particularly around renewables and electric vehicles. All of us will benefit from that," said Wolff-Bye, adding that every country must step up, though each faces its own unique trajectory and political pressures.

She noted that Malaysia is well-positioned to deepen its partnership with China and other regional players in advancing sustainability goals.

"We have a very strong collaboration with China, and other countries also have robust partnerships with our Chinese counterparts. So I think this is fertile ground for further cooperation and innovation," she said.

Wolff-Bye added that the national oil firm had signed memoranda of understanding with various partners in Southeast Asia, including China, to foster greater research and

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innovation.

She noted that Asia's growing population and resource demands further underline the urgency of adopting sustainable practices.

"It is a golden opportunity for Asia because the region continues to grow in demographics. So it's important — and here, there is demand not just for energy, but also for natural resources. But we can't consume natural resources the way we used to," she said.

Wolff-Bye emphasised that ensuring energy security was a core mandate for Petronas, not only for the nation but also for the customers it serves.

"That's why we closely monitor developments within Malaysia and work collaboratively with the entire energy ecosystem to model energy demand and determine the role we need to play.

"We are also looking at how much more domestic gas we need to produce, and whether we also need to resort to imports and so on. This is something we monitor very closely, and it's central to our core purpose — because, of course, there is no economic growth without energy," she added.

The media outreach programme was organised by Petronas ahead of the Energy Asia 2025 conference, which will take place from June 16 to 18, 2025. — Bernama