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Region urged to unite on clean energy

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia, as the Asean Chair, has called on member states to step up regional cooperation to drive a fair, secure and inclusive energy transition, in line with climate goals and the region's growing energy demand.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said the region's energy future must be grounded in unity, practical frameworks and mutual benefits.

"As Asean Chair, Malaysia is deeply committed to promoting dialogue, building consensus and advancing regional frameworks that will power a cleaner, more secure and more inclusive energy future," he said at the Energy Transition Meeting in Asean: Fostering Regional Cooperation organised by MyDigital here yesterday.

Fadillah, who is also the energy transition and water transformation minister said Asean's energy demand has been growing faster than the global average, at 3% annually, and is projected to rise by more than 60% by 2040, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

"The growth, while reflective of our economic dynamism, presents us with a pressing dilemma – how do we continue powering our progress while safeguarding environmental sustainability and ensuring affordability for all?

"The answer lies in a managed, inclusive and well-coordinated energy transition, one that reflects the diversity of Asean while advancing a common vision."

He highlighted Asean's progress under the Asean Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation Phase II, noting that renewable energy now makes up 34% of installed electricity capacity, though its share in total primary energy supply remains at 16%.

"Vietnam has rapidly expanded its solar capacity by more than 20GW since 2019, Indonesia is anchoring a Just Energy Transition Partnership to transition to cleaner energy sources with at least US\$20 billion (RM84b) of support and Thailand has adopted a Bio-Circular-Green Economy model to align sustainability with productivity."

He also reaffirmed Malaysia's target of 70% renewables in installed

capacity by 2050 under the National Energy Transition Roadmap.

Fadillah said regional integration was crucial, especially through mechanisms like the Asean Power Grid, which aims to unlock cross-border power trade, leveraging the region's uneven distribution of renewable resources.

"The Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project is a prime example of how multilateral electricity trade is possible, allowing countries to work together to deliver renewable electricity across borders.

"From a national perspective, Malaysia commenced its first cross-border green electricity trade with Singapore through Enegem or Energy Exchange Malaysia. In just 148 days, over 107 TWh (terrawatt-hour) of green electricity generated from solar and hydro has been successfully delivered across the Causeway to Singapore."

He stressed the need to harmonise green attributes such as Renewable Energy Certificates across the region to boost investor confidence and prevent double-counting. – Bernama