

S'pore going all out to cut emissions, says chief climate negotiator

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All options are on the table in Singapore's bid to shrink its carbon footprint.

This includes looking into the possibility of deploying nuclear energy here, as well as importing clean energy from as far as Australia, the Republic's chief climate negotiator Joseph Teo said.

"We are looking at all options," Mr Teo said on Tuesday evening during a panel discussion on climate change that was organised by the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Tembusu College.

The discussion was moderated by Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh, and also featured NUS conservation scientist Koh Lian Pin, who heads the Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions at the university, and Ms Wong Su-Yen, chairman of the Singapore Institute of Directors.

"One of the projects that is being worked on now is building a pipeline from Australia to Singapore, so we can import green electricity from Australia," Mr Teo said.

Australian firm Sun Cable's A\$30 billion (S\$30.9 billion) Australia-Asia PowerLink (AAPowerLink) project aims to connect Singapore via a 4,200km subsea cable to a solar farm in Darwin.

The project is expected to begin construction from late 2023, with the first supply of electricity to Darwin expected in 2026, and Singapore in 2027. Full supply capacity is expected to be reached by the end of 2028.



A worker installing rooftop solar photovoltaic panels at Shell Havelock Service Station last month. Besides tapping solar energy, Singapore has also identified nuclear energy as having the potential to supply about 10 per cent of the country's energy needs by the middle of the century. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

Singapore now relies mainly on natural gas, a kind of fossil fuel, for its energy needs, but is looking at ways to decarbonise its power sector.

Asked about Singapore's stance on nuclear energy as a source of energy to replace fossil fuels, Mr Teo said that a recent report commissioned by the Energy Market Au-

thority had identified nuclear as a potential source of energy for the country by 2050.

"As a small city state, our primary concern is that of safety... We

have done our feasibility studies, (the safety assurance) is not there yet, but we are not closing out the option," he said.

The Energy 2050 Committee re-

port, which was released last month, had identified nuclear energy as having the potential to supply about 10 per cent of the country's energy needs by the middle of the century.

During the event, Professor Koh, the conservation scientist, also highlighted the importance of nature-based climate solutions in tackling climate change.

Such solutions refer to efforts to protect natural habitats and reforest degraded areas, as well as improved management of activities that would require land conversion, such as agriculture, he said.

Global emissions of greenhouse gases last year reached 36.3 billion tonnes, according to the International Energy Agency.

"Recent research from our centre at NUS shows that by protecting all threatened tropical forests – by just protecting the standing forest – we can already begin to avoid emissions at a scale of about 1.9 billion tonnes a year," Prof Koh said.

Despite the scale of the climate crisis, the panellists urged students to remain optimistic about humanity's ability to tackle it.

Prof Koh said: "We need your brains, your brilliance, to help Singapore come up with better solutions to achieve our climate goals. We are trying our best. But the future belongs to you."

Ms Wong agreed, adding: "This is our planet, and this is where we all as humanity live, the only chance that we have is to take care of the home that we live in. If not us, then who?"

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