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Japanese utilities want G7 to allow countries to set their own paths to energy transition

Reuters

March 19, 2023 5:14 PM MDT · Updated 7 months ago



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TOKYO, March 17 (Reuters) - Japanese power utilities want Tokyo at the upcoming G7 climate meeting to promote allowing individual countries to set their own path to energy transition, the head of their industry body said on Friday.

As chair of the Group of Seven nations (G7) this year, Japan will host a ministerial meeting on climate, energy and the environment in the northern city of Sapporo on April 15-16, ahead of a G7 summit in Hiroshima on May 19-21, to promote what Japan calls realistic energy transition.

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The energy crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine "has taught many countries, including in Europe, that the conditions are different for each country, and that each country must find realistic solutions accordingly," said Kazuhiro Ikebe, chairman of Japan's federation of electric utilities.

"We hope the discussion will lead to common understanding that each country should take decarbonisation steps according to the actual situation," he told a news conference.

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The Japanese government has also called for flexibility while some G7 members want stricter rules

The Japanese government has also called for flexibility, while some G7 members want stricter rules on how countries should transition to cleaner energy.

Ikebe, who is also the president of Kyushu Electric Power Co Inc (9508.T), said thermal power generation run on fossil fuels, including coal, is still very important for Asian countries, including Japan.

"It is necessary to switch coal to natural gas and advance the energy transition, but since electricity is absolutely necessary for people's lives and economic activities, each country should take an energy transition path according to the actual circumstances," he said.

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Japan aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 46% by 2030 versus 2013 levels by boosting renewable energy in its electricity mix to 36%-38%, double 2019's levels, and nuclear power to 20%-22% from 2019's 6%.

The world's fifth-biggest emitter also aims to cut the share of coal in the mix to 19% by 2030, from 32% in 2019, and the gas share to 20% from 37%.

Reporting by Yuka Obayashi; Editing by Susan Fenton

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