

Malaysia: End Political Rhetoric! Declare Climate Change Emergency

Monday 17 June 2019, by [RAJ Sharan](#) (Date first published: 22 April 2019).

In 2015, Malaysia's net Green House Gas (GHG) emission stood at 50,479,060 tons while we pretend to hide behind our status as a developing nation. While Malaysia pledged to reduce GHG intensity per GDP by 35% by 2030 to UNFCCC, our pledge will remain a rhetoric if we don't take urgent measures to control our GHG output.

This is because we rely heavily on private transport consuming 14.4 billion liters of petrol per annum and we generate 86% of our electricity from fossil fuel. Malaysia needs to declare a climate emergency in order reorganize our priorities to combat climate change. How can we achieve our UNFCCC commitments if we fail to tackle the following issues?

- Forest cover area nationally is being depleted at great speed. Lacking other means of revenue, State governments are cutting down their forest area at a disturbing rate.
- Prioritizing private transport by expanding of highways leading to deforestation particularly in Selangor and Penang.
- Putrajaya choose to support third national car instead improving public transport.
- Poor enforcement paves way for Illegal factories continues to dump their waste into our rivers and seas e.g. Sungai Kim Kim in Johor and clearing of forested hills, where no one takes responsibility e.g. Bukit Kledang in Perak.
- We continue to strive for GDP growth without fully understanding its implications to the climate as economic plans are structured and executed independent of environmental concerns.
- Overdevelopment causing landslides and siltation of rivers and dams e.g. in Cameron Highlands.

Thus, PSM ask, is Putrajaya really serious about Climate Change?

Malaysia needs to put a moratorium on new fossil fuel power plant and have definite deadline to phase our coal and diesel/oil power plants. Renewable energy and energy efficiency need to be expanded aggressively to replace fossil fuel. In 2015, 1/6 of all electric for commercial sector was consumed by the government. The government must commit to reduce grid-based electricity by half before 2025 through energy efficiency and rooftop solar on their buildings.

Circular economy can reduce at least 50% of GHG by recycling, bio-gas generation and zero landfill policy. About 45% of solid waste in landfill is food waste which can be converted into bio-methane to generate electricity. Bio-methane from Indah Water Konsortium (IWK) plants can generate 2.4 GWh of electricity. The use of bio-degradable plastic must be expanded beyond plastics bags to cover products such as sanitary products, diapers and packaging.

We should make it more expensive to own cars via excise duties and channel funds to develop public transport. Malaysians are forced to own cars due the lack of comprehensive public transport system.

Declaring climate emergency will create the sense of urgency for eco-friendly policies to be executed. Eco-friendly policies create and sustain “green jobs” while reducing our import for raw materials, petrol and coal which will strengthen our economy. Malaysia should commit itself to become carbon neutral by 2030 before working towards becoming a carbon sink nation by 2040.

Sharan Raj, Coordinator of PSM’s Environmental Bureau

P.S.

• THINK LEFT PSM on APRIL 22, 2019:

<https://thinkleft.net/2019/04/22/end-political-rhetoric-declare-climate-change-emergency/>