

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**NIK NAZMI NIK AHMAD
MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

FOR

SOUTHEAST ASIA CLIMATE INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2024

22 JUNE 2024 (SATURDAY)

**SHAFTSBURY ASTERIA,
CYBERJAYA**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Profesor Dr. Ahmad Farhan Mohd Sadullah
Vice Chancellor of Universiti Putra Malaysia

Mr Muhd Farhan Abdul Rahman

Director of Southeast Asia Climate Investment Summit 2024

Yang Mulia Tengku Dato' Dr. Hishammuddin Zaizi Bin Yang Amat Mulia Tengku Bendahara Azman Shah Alhaj

Ceo@School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Yang Berbahagia Professor Dr. Bany Ariffin Amin Noordin

Dean of School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia

The Management of the University, esteemed speakers and sponsors

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Malaysia
Madani

INTRODUCTION

1. I want to begin by thanking the organisers of the **Southeast Asia Climate Investment Summit 2024** for inviting me to deliver the Keynote Address. It is a pleasure and honour for me to be here today, especially since this is a youth-driven event related to climate change.
2. I think when it comes to climate change, it's more important to listen to the voices of the young. Indeed, there will be a very engaging series of sessions ahead, ranging from green investments to sustainable solutions to how academia and the industry can collaborate on sustainability.

All of them feature distinguished and interesting speakers. And so, I will try and keep my remarks concise.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL

3. The very fabric of our planet, especially the climate that has sustained our lives for millennia, is undergoing a dramatic transformation. The scientific evidence is undeniable: climate change is real, it is human-driven, and it is accelerating at an alarming rate.

4. Let's talk about facts. The average global temperature has risen by over 1 degree Celsius since the pre-industrial era. This seemingly small change translates into massive consequences. Extreme weather events like heat waves, droughts, floods, and wildfires are becoming more frequent and intense. A 2021 study found that the frequency of heatwaves has increased by a factor of two since the 1960s.

5. Climate change has also contributed to the rising sea levels that threaten coastal communities worldwide. By 2100, projections estimate sea levels could rise to up to a meter, displacing millions and inundating low-lying islands. You only need to look at the heatwaves and floods that regularly hit Malaysia to realise that it is not something that can just be ignored.

6. The human cost of climate change is staggering. The World Health Organization estimates that climate change will cause an additional 250,000 deaths per year by 2050, from malnutrition, heat stress, and infectious diseases. Food security is under threat as changing weather patterns disrupt agricultural production. Millions, particularly in developing nations, face displacement and poverty due to climate-induced disasters.

WHAT MALAYSIA IS DOING

7. The government of Malaysia isn't taking things passively. Our country aims to reduce its economy-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity by 45% (relative to GDP) by 2030 compared to the 2005 level, as outlined in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

8. My Ministry is concurrently developing a **Climate Change Bill** and **National Adaptation Plan** to further strengthen our climate resilience and response capabilities. We are also putting together a **national policy on plastics production, use and waste management to be in line with the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations.**

9. The current government has made sustainability at the core of its governing agenda via the Malaysia Madani and *Ekonomi Madani* frameworks.

The initiatives we have introduced, such as the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR), the New Industrial Master Plan (NIMP) 2030, the Mid-Term Review of the 12th Malaysia Plan (MTR-12MP), Hydrogen Economy and Technology Roadmap (HETR) and the National Semiconductor Strategy (NSS), that will not only contribute to climate action but also transform our economy, creating high-paying jobs of the future for your generation and those after you.

10. The recent **National Climate Change Action Council (MTPIN)** meeting has also agreed to set up a **National Decarbonisation Committee**, which I will chair. Made up of the state governments and other stakeholders, its role will be to ensure Malaysia's transition to low-carbon development is orderly and inclusive. The MTPIN also agreed that there should be a speeding up of various policies such as NETR and others. MTPIN has also agreed to approve **the National Climate Change Policy 2.0** that shall complement other initiatives like the **National Adaptation Plan** and the **National Carbon Market Policy**.

11. We need to go beyond our borders in fighting climate change due to its transboundary nature. Thus, developing Malaysia's carbon markets is an integral part of our strategy since it will bring in more carbon investments to spur projects that can help us achieve our climate change aspirations.

12. Furthermore, I believe we can achieve more than what we set out to do if support from developed countries is forthcoming. Carbon market is one of the many paths developed countries can use to contribute to the fight against climate change. We have our work cut out for us but we can learn from our ASEAN partners in developing a carbon market that adapts according to each national circumstance.

13. We pledged during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to maintain at least 50% of our land area under forests and tree cover and we have held to this. The channelling of **Ecological Fiscal Transfer for Biodiversity Conservation (EFT) funds**, which incentivises the states to protect their forests, has been increased to RM200 million in 2024 from RM150 million last year. We have also sought to empower local and indigenous communities in the fight against encroachment, illegal logging, and wildlife poaching by expanding the **Community Rangers programme**.

14. Recognising that climate financing is also a key issue, the government has established the **Forest Conservation Certificate (FCC)**. Developed under the REDD+ Finance Framework, it facilitates the mobilisation of sustainable financing for forests via the collaborative structure of a Public-Private Partnership. This includes holding discussions with state governments regarding the **carbon market** because land and forestry fall within their jurisdictions.

INCLUSIVITY IS CRUCIAL

15. We also know that the young—as the group that will be most severely impacted by climate change—deserve a permanent seat on the table when it comes to policy making. We’ve thus created a **Youth Climate Change Cluster** to help engage with the youth.

16. If you will allow me to share an anecdote from our first meeting, which took place earlier in the month, the representatives of one of the youth groups who attended felt very strongly that while there are young people, especially in the urban and educated groups, who are conscious of and oriented towards progressive policies, the bulk remain unaware of policy both at the national and international levels. This is apt and it is this approach that we have tried to adopt moving forward.

Ladies and gentlemen,

ASEAN AS CENTRAL TO CLIMATE ACTION

17. **2025 will see Malaysia assume the Chairmanship of ASEAN.** As **Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim** said recently, we see ASEAN as more than just a pillar of our foreign policy, but also “...a force multiplier, and a valuable asset to exercise our agency.”

18. That being said, it has been argued that the regional grouping has been underutilised by its Member States and I think this also applies to the environment and climate action.

For instance, one of the things I hope we can pursue in the long run is an **ASEAN approach to international climate forums** such as the **COP. COP28** was not without its achievements, including the historic **UAE Consensus**—but still more could be done, especially in achieving more just climate financing for developing and smaller nations like ours.

19. That is also why it is highly appropriate and necessary for events like this to be “Southeast Asian” rather than just “Malaysian.” It goes beyond just the fact that we are ASEAN Chair next year. Our country’s future and, when it comes to climate change, it’s survival lies in ASEAN.

20. Southeast Asia is the fulcrum of Asia’s economic growth. And so, climate action in Asia and dare I say, the world—will rise or fall depending on how ASEAN acts or fails to act. So, we must work together, and these linkages must extend from beyond government-to-government but also people-to-people. This event, I am positive, will contribute to this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

FOUR POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

21. Let me leave you know with **four points** that I hope will be able to inform the discussions ahead. **First, our journey towards the green transition must be firmly aligned with our national aspirations and commitments to sustainable development.**

As custodians of our planet's resources, we must ensure that every step we take must be in line with our overarching goals of preserving our environment for generations to come. We must forge ahead with a vision that harmonises economic progress with environmental stewardship, acknowledging that our actions today will shape the world we leave for tomorrow.

22. Furthermore, our transition must be just, inclusive, and cost-effective. We cannot afford to leave anyone behind on this transformative journey. As we chart our course toward a sustainable energy future, we must be mindful of the challenges our low-income and vulnerable populations face. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the benefits and opportunities arising from this transition permeate every stratum of society, fostering an environment where no one is marginalised or disadvantaged.

23. Third, effective governance and a whole-of-nation approach are paramount in realising our energy transition goals. Collaboration among all stakeholders, government bodies, private enterprises, civil society, and communities is not just desirable but essential. By fostering a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility, we can create a vibrant energy industry ecosystem that not only sustains itself but also propels us toward a low-carbon economy. Together, we can surmount the challenges that lie ahead and unlock the boundless potential of a sustainable energy future.

24. **Lastly, we must prioritise the creation of high-impact job opportunities and the active involvement of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).** Our transition to a sustainable energy future presents many opportunities for economic growth and job creation. By nurturing innovation, fostering entrepreneurship, and empowering SMEs, we can harness the full spectrum of talent and creativity within our nation, driving sustainable development and prosperity for all. I hope this Summit will be able to discuss how we can create the talent pool necessary to sustain these opportunities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CONCLUSION

25. We are at a historic, critical juncture. We need to work together and form a collective response from the government, businesses, individuals, and society. We need to increase investments in green infrastructure and incentivise sustainable practices.

26. Businesses need to implement eco-friendly practices and promote transparency in their supply chains, and we as individuals need to reduce our carbon footprint, support sustainable businesses, and hold each other accountable. Southeast Asia has the golden opportunity to become the global leader in climate solutions. With talented entrepreneurs, a skilled workforce, and technological advancements that are rapidly developing, we can build a sustainable future together.

27. And this challenge also provides leadership opportunities for the young. Addressing climate change is the crisis of your generation, even though you did not cause it. And it will be the means through which you learn the skills and gain the experience you will need when the time comes for your generation to assume the mantle of leadership of our society and the world. I am confident you will prove equal to the task.

28. As we look into the future, let's envision a green and sustainable region as the SEA Climate Investment Summit 2024 promises to be informative and inspirational. Through collaboration and innovation, we can build a more sustainable future for Southeast Asia.

29. We encourage you to participate actively, share insights, and build connections. As we look towards the future, imagine Southeast Asia to be powered by clean energy as our community thrives in harmony with the environment. I again thank the sponsors and organising committee for making this summit possible. I wish you all a most productive Summit ahead.