



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

KEYNOTE SPEECH

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MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**FOR
MALAYSIA EPR ROUNDTABLE SERIES:
ENABLING CIRCULAR ECONOMY VIA EPR**

25 JULY 2024 (THURSDAY)

**PUTRAJAYA MARRIOTT HOTEL,
PUTRAJAYA**

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning.

Mr. Tom Jørgen Martinussen

Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Niloy Banerjee

Resident Representative UNDP Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Let me begin by thanking the Royal Norwegian Embassy for your active collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) in making today possible. Thanks also to the **TOMRA** and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** for your kind contributions. Our event today has been the culmination of a team effort, with each organisation involved playing a significant role in the global push to forge a sustainable environment for all.

2. The introduction of plastic has been a beneficial development. As the material is cheap and can be used in many products, no one can deny that plastics are more convenient for people. The low cost of plastic products also suits the buying power of consumers. Thus, the demand for plastic production has increased.

3. Regrettably, time has brought us to a critical juncture where unmanageable plastic waste has escalated into a pressing global issue. Research in Malaysia has identified plastic as the second most prevalent waste after “food waste”, a trend mirrored across the globe.

4. As a result, certain countries have introduced various approaches and policies to manage plastic pollution. In Malaysia’s case, plastic sustainability is guided by **Malaysia's Roadmap Towards Zero Single Use Plastics 2018-2030 (SUP Roadmap)** and the **Malaysia Plastics Sustainability Roadmap 2021-2030 (MPSR)**.

5. The SUP Roadmap aims to gradually phase down the use of SUP and, later, phase it out. The MPSR guides the industry in embarking on the production of plastic towards circularity. I believe the circular economy approach is already in place by the industries. As the sectors move forward with this, the Government must likewise enhance waste management. This government-industry partnership can be improved further by introducing the **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** strategy and this is what has brought us together today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

THE STRATEGIC PILLARS OF PLASTIC NEUTRALITY

6. Any discussion on the EPR must first be prefaced by an outline of the strategic pillars that guide our national approach towards achieving plastic neutrality:

a) First is **Policy and Regulation**. We are committed to strengthening legislation and policies promoting plastic waste reduction, encouraging recycling, and supporting sustainable development.

Through regulatory measures, we aim to create an enabling environment that drives the transition towards a circular economy.

b) The second pillar is **Innovation and Technology**. Harnessing technology and innovation are crucial in finding sustainable alternatives to plastic and improving waste management practices. We encourage research and development in biodegradable materials, recycling technologies, and waste-to-energy solutions, fostering a culture of innovation that contributes to environmental sustainability.

c) Finally, there are **Partnerships and Collaborations**. It's universally acknowledged that no single entity can effectively combat the plastic pollution crisis on its own. We are committed to strengthening collaborations between government bodies, private sectors, NGOs, academia, and international partners. We can make a more significant impact by pooling our knowledge, leveraging resources, and scaling up successful initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen,

WHY EPR MATTERS

7. To return to our main focus today, many experts believe that the best approach to accelerate the transition towards plastic circularity is to implement the EPR scheme. This is why I have always stressed how a “just transition” is a very important aspect. The EPR seems to be the best tool by the government to ensure that producers play a role in achieving sustainability.

8. Unfortunately, developing a new regulation is only worthwhile if it can be implemented and positively shake up the economic ecosystem. The transition must be in phases and via a consensus by all parties. Thus, this programme will be a catalyst and an excellent start to ignite and explore the best EPR implementation approach.

9. Recall again how convenient plastic is to an ordinary consumer. Our work therefore must not only be underpinned by urgency but also an understanding of the realities on the ground, including in rural, remote and underprivileged areas. We must provide a soft landing for people even as we work to reduce plastic pollution. Finding this balance will be the key to sustainable, deep-rooted success.

10. The world is currently negotiating the **Global Plastics Treaty** under the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). NRES' priority here is to prepare Malaysia for the upcoming obligations this will create. Even though the treaty is still being negotiated, we must be ready. Therefore, NRES is looking forward to having a specific regulation for plastic sustainability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CONCLUSION

11. We are full of hope that our gathering today can provide insights and ways for us to move forward. Let us commit to become part of the solutions our planet needs. Our actions, no matter how small, can lead to transformative change.

12. We must never doubt that a future where our environment is no longer burdened by plastic waste, where our oceans thrive, and where our actions demonstrate a profound respect for our planet is possible.

13. I urge each of you to embrace the challenge of plastic neutrality. Let's work hand in hand to innovate, educate, and inspire, building a legacy of sustainability for generations to come. The power to make a difference is in our hands.

14. Thank you for your attention, your commitment, and your passion. Together, let's pave the way to a plastic-free future. Thank you.