



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

OPENING REMARKS

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MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

FOR

CLIMATE GOVERNANCE MALAYSIA'S
INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL SUMMIT

9 SEPTEMBER 2024 (MONDAY)

SASANA KIJANG, BANK NEGARA MALAYSIA
KUALA LUMPUR

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Malaysia
Madani

Yang Berbahagia Datin Seri Sunita Rajakumar
Chairperson, Climate Governance Malaysia

Members of the International Advisory Panel,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

1. I am very pleased to speak at the first International Advisory Panel Summit organised by Climate Governance Malaysia. We tend to describe all gatherings in this country as “historic”, but I think this is certainly the case for CGM and the people who put the Panel as well as the Summit together. Congratulations on your efforts and rest assured that it has and will continue to be of consequence.
2. The human civilisation’s Industrial Age of 150-odd years might have overseen the great creation of wealth and an improvement in the lifestyles of many. However, we also know that inequalities have increased significantly, within nations and between nations, and we have not fully understood the implications of the unbridled extraction of resources and pollution of the environment that we have engaged in, which admittedly has maintained our lifestyles and growing populations who are living longer.

3. So, while we all agree that we need a transition that will help us adapt to the uncertainties of climate change – a process which involves decarbonising the economy, reducing damage to the environment and promoting a circular economy – we must ensure that the transition is smooth and just. The government of Malaysia is more than cognisant that this is our overriding responsibility as elected officials for the people.
4. So, this is an extremely important topic and I am glad to be able to contribute in this forum for conversations between the private sector, policymakers and regulators. This is a government that listens to civil society and academia—but it is also one that acts.
5. Certainly, there is a lot on NRES' plate and we are not simply running in place. As you may know, my Ministry is pursuing a large number of legislative bills and initiatives, including the highly-anticipated National Climate Change Bill, LT-LEDS, NDC Roadmap and Action Plan, National Adaptation Plan and Carbon Market Policy as well as industry platforms such as the Asean Common Carbon Framework.
6. At the upcoming COP29 in Azerbaijan, billed to be a “Finance COP” to mobilise finance for climate action, we hold the view that further commitments from the developed world, including China and the US will be paramount. Malaysia is advocating for a strong voice for ASEAN at the COP meeting, while also aligning with 16 other mega-diverse countries on biodiversity, climate and finance. So, we have a lot to do. But that is precisely why from time to time we need to pause and take stock of what's before us and the road ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CHALLENGES FACED

7. Of course, things would be a lot simpler if we could just legislate climate action into existence. However, as policymakers, we are constantly balancing multiple priorities and tensions. When it comes to climate change, this involves balancing the prioritisation of mitigation and adaptation, driving a development agenda with reduced emissions and preserving our biodiversity, pricing carbon and ensuring a just transition, honouring our international commitments yet recognising that land and water is a state matter, needing wide and deep consultation with as many in the stakeholder universe with finite resources.
8. Our trading partners are also concerned they will be accused of outsourcing their emissions and environmental destruction to countries that are not yet managing their emissions or specifically, pricing carbon. As we know, the fear and danger is of these questions emerging as another form of trade barrier and hence dissension between the Global North and South.
9. While Malaysia has contributed only 0.69% of global GHG emissions, we are a responsible global citizen and recognise our absolute emissions are growing, a significant part of this to customers who are not valuing or paying for emissions generated in the production process and transportation.
10. As we all understand, this is, at its essence, a question of the competitiveness of nations. Ours is just one voice against the overwhelming inertia and bias of trade and financial infrastructure which benefits a few and is accountable to almost no one.
11. I will be the first to admit that everyone is finding the transition journey difficult. It is clear that energy consumption globally and in Malaysia is increasing.

12. Both on an absolute basis and a per capita basis: each one of us is using much more power than the previous generation. Simply reflect on your lifestyle versus that of your parents and grandparents and you will see the truth of this.
13. We are hence actively working to decarbonise our economy. We recognise this doesn't mean simply pivoting from brown to green immediately. Sometimes, to prevent large-scale disruption and a massive shock to many households, it also means moving carefully, sometimes even pausing, but never taking your eye off the goal which we are laser-focused on.

Ladies and gentlemen,

CONCLUSION

14. I have simply outlined the many contradictions and challenges that face climate policymaking, especially in a developing country like ours. They defy easy or swift solutions even though the challenge of climate change is existential and bearing down hard upon us.
15. But this is not a time for despair or recrimination, but for calm heads and decisive action. I trust the International Advisory Panel will have much to add to what I have laid out.
16. Allow me to stop here. I look forward to hearing from the International Advisory Panel and to any questions you might have for me later. Thank you.