Newsletter

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Cameron Highlands tea plantation
Source: https://unsplash.com/photos/c61jL_NpAn8

LET'S TALK: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Leaders during the conference

Source: https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/what-watch-day-4-cop26-2021-11-04/

From Rio to Glasgow: Implementing Equity in Climate Actions

By Chee Yoke Ling and Meenakshi Raman

A key principle of international cooperation for sustainable development is "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities" (CBDR) among States that recognizes historical responsibility for the unequal use of the planet's resources that has led to unequal creation of wealth – financial, technological, as well as human and institutional capacity.

Since 1992, CBDR has become part of international soft law and a legally binding principle reflected and made operational in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and its related legal instruments, the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015).

The genesis of this principle of equity is the Summit-level United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. In addition to Agenda 21, the programme of action towards sustainable development at the national and global levels for the 21st century, the Summit adopted the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development that obtained the highest political endorsement of Heads of State and Government.

The General Assembly Resolution 44/228 of December 1989 that provided for the mandate and preparatory process of UNCED was itself the product of intense negotiations. This historic Resolution called for an integrated linkage between environment and development. The initial conceptualisation of the conference essentially focused on environmental problems without fundamentally addressing the development dimensions of developing countries, nor the dominant role of developed countries' consumption in the environmental crisis.

Malaysia as Chair of the Group of 77 in 1989 played a leading role in coordinating the Group's position and was its lead negotiator. Brazil, India, Iran, Mexico, Mozambique, Pakistan and Tanzania were also among the active core group of the G77 which worked effectively to hold a united and consistent position. The G77 and China had earlier proposed a much stronger draft that advocated the concept of "historical culpability" and the environmental impact of unsustainable consumption predominantly by developed countries. Following from this was the call for the provision of adequate, new and additional financial resources, and environmentally sound technologies on preferential and concessional terms, by developed countries to enable developing countries to achieve sustainable development.

From the beginning there was resistance to the inclusion of CBDR from developed countries during the UNCED negotiations. Ultimately most delegations could not deny that sustainable development requires a restructuring of international relations (e.g., in trade, finance especially the South's external debt, and foreign direct investments) and that domestic policy changes alone are insufficient. Beyond that, ecological and social imperatives also could not be ignored or set aside while economic growth proceeded.

However, during that final plenary in the early hours of the morning of the final day of the UNCED Summit in Rio, the United States put on record its reservations regarding the principles on the right to development, and on CBDR for environmental degradation and corrective actions. However, in the face of support from all other countries for the final draft, it did not block the adoption of the 27 principles of the Rio Declaration after months of long, difficult and often heated debate.

Accordingly, Principle 7 that provides the basis for the equitable sharing of State responsibilities reads:

"States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command."

Meanwhile, two major UN treaties were negotiated in parallel with the UNCED outcome documents: the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity.[1] CBDR is a principle for these treaties too, and was the subject of tension, pressures and compromise. Malaysia, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that coordinated the national position and led negotiations

[1] UNCED called on the United Nations General Assembly to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare, by June 1994, a Convention to Combat Desertification, particularly in Africa. The Convention was adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and entered into force on 26 December 1996, with 197 Parties today. Together with the climate and biodiversity treaties, these are commonly referred to as the "Rio Conventions".

across the three tracks, was part of the core group of G77 and China negotiators obtained the explicit inclusion of CBDR in the UNFCCC.

The successor to Agenda 21, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals that was adopted in 2015, is also based inter alia on CBDR as a shared principle:

"We **reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities,** as set out in principle 7 thereof.

Operationalising CBDR in the international climate regime

The UNFCCC's preambular paragraph 6 acknowledges that "the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, **in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities** and their social and economic conditions". (Emphasis added)

Source: https://img.etimg.com/thumb/msid-86288281,width-650,imgsize-77436,,resizemode-4,quality-100/image.jpg

Paragraph 1 of Article 3 on Principles reads: "The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, **on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.**

Accordingly, the **developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof."** (Emphasis added)

Paragraph 1 of Article 4 sets out 10 important commitments for actions to combat climate change by "All Parties, **taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities** and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances". (Emphasis added)

The means of implementation are focused in Paragraph 3 of Article 4, where developed country Parties commit *"to provide new and additional financial resources to meet the agreed full costs incurred by developing country Parties in complying with their obligations"* and to *"also provide such financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, needed by the developing country Parties to meet the agreed full incremental costs of implementing measures that are covered by paragraph 1 of this Article ..."*

Furthermore, equity also applies among developed countries under Article 4: *"The implementation of these commitments shall take into account the need for adequacy and predictability in the flow of funds and the importance of* ***appropriate burden sharing among the developed country Parties".*** (Emphasis added)

Although the U.S. reserved on CBDR in the Rio Declaration the Bush (Senior)

Administration accepted it in the UNFCCC and became a Party. However, as a compromise for the U.S. to join the UNFCCC, there was no numerical mitigation target for developed countries in the treaty. This was to be subsequently negotiated in what became the Kyoto Protocol.

Architecture of the UNFCCC: from "top down" to "bottom up" in the Paris Agreement[2]

The UNFCCC is a legally binding framework for international cooperation to combat climate change, with the objective of *"stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner"*.

The two pillars of actions are thus mitigation and adaptation. Based on CBDR, mitigation is the obligation of developed countries while developing countries committed to a sustainable development pathway with support from developed countries. It was also acknowledged that developing countries bear the brunt of climate change and would have to undertake massive adaptation actions that also need external support.

Some developed countries, notably the Europeans, have traditionally called for a more disciplined, "top-down" approach to mitigation commitments, whereby an aggregate goal is determined by agreement for all developed countries, based on what science indicates as needed to limit global temperature rise. Each country then makes national commitments towards that target. This was the agreed approach that resulted in the Kyoto Protocol under the UNFCCC that legally binds developed country Parties to agreed greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The Protocol's first commitment period was from 2008 to 2012, while the second commitment period was from 2013 to 2020.

Over the years developed countries, particularly the U.S., have unfortunately attempted to undermine CBDR, and in the process have diluted this central principle through decisions of the Conference of Parties (COP) that meet annually. The Obama Administration attempted at the Copenhagen COP15 in 2009 to turn the developed countries' mitigation commitments to a "bottom-up" approach whereby each country would pledge what it could do and a review would then be done on such pledges. Although this "pledge-and-review" approach was strongly rejected by developing countries as a re-writing of the UNFCCC, it found its way to the decision of the Cancun COP16 (2010), eventually landing in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

While developing countries ensured that the Paris Agreement reflects CBDR and respective capabilities in its implementation, developing countries now have to commit to "nationally determined contributions" that include voluntary domestic mitigation measures, that are subject to more scrutiny ("enhanced transparency framework"). Developed countries, instead of being obligated to take the lead as agreed in the UNFCCC, now "**should** continue to take the lead" in economy-wide absolute emissions reductions targets. At the same time the developed countries' commitments to provide finance and technology for

[2] There are currently 197 Parties to the UNFCCC, 192 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and 193 Parties to the Paris Agreement. The U.S. under the Trump Administration withdrew on 4 November 2019 and the Biden Administration re-joined on 20 January 2021.

climate actions have not been fulfilled. Importantly, "loss and damage" was included in the Paris Agreement as the crucial third pillar of the global climate regime, together with mitigation and adaptation. This recognises that there is permanent damage caused by climate change for which adaptation is no longer possible. It came after years of demand and difficult negotiations, but there is little progress made so far on implementing the mechanism established at the Warsaw COP19 (2013) due to developed countries not delivering the means of implementation.

Glasgow 2021: A "great escape"?

Contrary to the mainstream portrayal that the Glasgow COP26 outcomes (called the Glasgow Pact), were "historic", an honest assessment of the decisions reached shows that there has been a grave setback for equity, the poor and the planet.
The Pact has been viewed as being relatively strong on the steps to be taken on mitigation (but in the direction of "net zero targets" in 2050 that is contestable), but there is no commensurate scale of finance for developing countries, including for adaptation and loss and damage.

While developing countries have expressed disappointment in this regard, especially on the failure to deliver on the promise of USD100 billion per year by 2020 made in 2009 at the Copenhagen COP15, in the case of mitigation, the Glasgow Pact has enabled the undifferentiated sharing of the responsibility between developed and developing countries for meeting the current emissions gap[3] without any regard for the historical responsibility of developed countries and their overuse of the atmospheric space since the pre-industrial era.

Instead of being true to ensuring international climate cooperation on the basis of equity and in respecting the principle of CBDR and respective capabilities between developed and developing countries, which is the bedrock of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, developed countries persisted in subverting the equity principle to one of 'common and shared responsibilities' by ignoring their historical responsibility.

In fact, they have successfully managed to chart their 'great escape' from the much-needed rapid emission reductions today, to distant pledges of 2050 net zero targets, coupled with the potential use of carbon offsets in nature, including forests and oceans as carbon sinks, through trading in the international carbon market, all of which have been made possible by the decisions reached in Glasgow.

Despite the persistent efforts of some developing country groupings such as the Like-Minded Developing Countries to influence the draft texts against legitimising the net zero targets by 2050 especially of developed countries, and to take into account the latter's historical responsibilities and overuse of the atmospheric space, the Glasgow Pact failed to reflect these concerns, due to opposition from developed countries.

This led to Bolivia, speaking for the LMDC in its intervention on the final day in response to 'keeping the 1.5C goal alive', to express that calls for net zero targets by 2050 by all was a "great fallacy" and a "great escape by the developed countries" from "doing real rapid emissions reduction now" and that this amounted to "carbon colonialism", with the exhaustion of the remaining carbon budget left within this decade.

[3] This means the reductions needed to limit temperature rise as per the Paris Agreement goal of holding global average temperature to 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees C; and what are in the nationally determined contributions of all Parties.

This narrative of the "great escape" and "carbon colonialism" of the developed countries escaped the mainstream media, but what prevailed was the scape-goating of India and China as the 'villains' of Glasgow.

Source: https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Message-Nuclear-must-be-represented-at-COP26,-says

It was the 'common and shared approach' in blurring differentiation between developed and developing countries on climate actions, that led to the highly sensationalised drama over a paragraph in the Glasgow Pact, that called on all Parties to **"phase-down"** on "unabated coal" and to "phase-out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies" and cast India and China in bad light.

The controversial paragraph in point, prior to the gavelling of the final decisions, referred to a **"phase-out"** of "unabated coal" and did not have any reference to "provision of targeted support for the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances", which were insertions proposed by India, and supported by China.

Invisible to many were the billions of poor people in developing countries with either limited or no access to modern energy at all, including in India and China.

In fact, the irony was that US President Joe Biden, just ahead of the Glasgow talks, asked the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to pump more oil, in order to keep energy prices low in the US.

For those witnessing the Glasgow COP26, CBDR is hanging by the thread, and away from the media, developed countries are not walking the talk in showing real leadership in climate action and in enabling the just transition to low-carbon development in developing countries.

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Agroecology: The Key to Food Security Amid Climate Change?

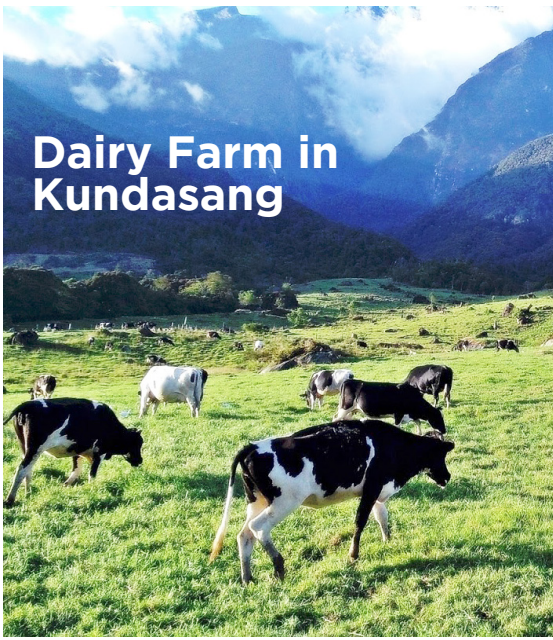
By Aida Yasmin Azhar

Introduction

The 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has pledged promises for the climate amid warnings of disastrous global heating.[1] Among other major goals that were addressed, pursuing global food security towards a sustainable and climate-resilient food system was also brought to the table. Food systems are significant contributors to the climate crisis where everything from production to the process of food wastes contributes about 21% to 37% total of greenhouse gases emissions.[2] The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has put food systems at a crossroads and together with the climate crisis, the four pillars of food security; availability; access; utilisation and safety are deeply affected. Along with the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, the global community needs to impose comprehensive actions in transforming food production, distribution, and consumption patterns in a sustainable way. In building a climate-resilient food system which enables soils, water, ecosystems, and farmers to be protected, agroecology enables to provide the solution towards a greener transformation.[3]

Agroecology and Its Benefits

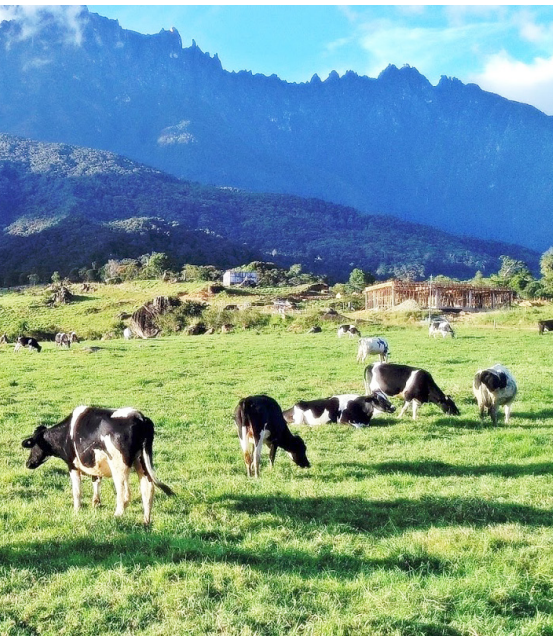
As human ingenuity knows no bounds, today's food and agricultural systems, aided by significant technological advances in modern agriculture have succeeded in supplying large volumes of food to the global market. Despite this, people are still going hungry. Climate change is further threatening food security and taking a dramatic toll on the world's dwindling natural resources and biodiversity. High-external inputs, resource-intensive agricultural systems have caused massive deforestation, water scarcities, biodiversity loss, soil depletion and high levels of greenhouse gas emissions which have put humanity at its darkest hour.[4] Across the world, communities are converging around a simple but powerful concept - agroecology. Dubbed as the next revolution in food systems, agroecology plays a vital role in fostering climate change adaptation, mitigation as well as bolstering a sustainable food system.



Source: http://sabahup2date.blogspot.com/2015/10/desa-cattle-dairy-farm-kundasang-seakan.html

Agroecology is a way of farming with nature where it builds resilience to climate change and disease outbreaks by combining different plants and animals based on farmers' traditional knowledge of their local environment, along with

the sustainable use of technologies and innovation throughout its practices.[5] Also, the core principle of agroecology is to favour the use of natural resources and limits the usage of chemicals to fertilise crops and fight pests. Relying on diversity, agroecology provides secure livelihoods based on cooperation, solidarity and short supply chains that retain value in the community. Based on a comprehensive analysis of scientific studies and two case studies in Kenya and Senegal, agroecology strengthens resilience and supports low emissions pathway.[6] It promotes diversity of landscapes comprising of animals and plants together with its practices which leads to healthy and fertile soils. Representing a paradigm shift in the agriculture sector, starting with



understanding the current conditions and incentivising the systems that employ the best solutions; establishing the soil as a living organism; managing pests through natural practices and with increased biodiversity, and focusing on knowledge development and community empowerment at the local level, contributes significantly to climate-proofing a sustainable food system.[7]

Agroecology for ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have been following different levels of intensification pathways due to growing demand for agricultural products and is called for a major shift towards an agroecological transition. Agriculture is a vital sector for the ASEAN community which contributes 15% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the region's economy and is a direct concern of many, especially those living in the rural areas.[8]

Agroecology transition plays an important role in the COVID-19 recovery process, leading to a greener, inclusive and more resilient ASEAN region, shifting its paradigm in boosting agrobiodiversity, increasing the ability of soils to retain carbon and strengthening the resilience of agriculture towards pests, natural disasters and disease, alongside encouraging healthy diets. While diversifying the adaptations to the natural environment, agroecology offers youth job opportunities through a revamped ecological and profitable alternative to both traditional and industrial farming.[9] Additionally, it also empowers small farmers, by helping to mitigate the production risk, providing access to appropriate inputs at lower cost, and harnessing scientific and traditional knowledge. ASEAN has always emphasised securing sustainable and inclusive food systems by adopting frameworks and being involved in projects such as ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework, Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security in the ASEAN Region (SPA-FS)[10] and ASEAN Sustainable Agrifood Systems (ASEAN SAS),[11] among others. These initiatives have been set forth to provide solutions for a

FOREIGN MINISTER DATO' SRI SAIFUDDIN ABDULLAH AT AN ASEAN MEETING

Source: https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/elementor/thumbs/51606380960_c78496cb31_k-pesdmi2d78pkydzz6xsezdnzqx8vxb32djhq bg4clu.jpg

sustainable food system and to document the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the agroecological transition in the region. As both economic and environmental dynamics have an intricate regional linkage, it is crucial for ASEAN nations to have a common position and strategy in achieving a smooth agroecology farming transition.

Although agroecology could be one of the possible solutions which contributes to food security, it may not be the 'one-size-fits-all solution' due to the factor of limited access to land. Despite that, with all the established committees, meetings, and frameworks on strategies for sustainable agriculture, it is crucial for ASEAN to strengthen its cooperation at the international level as well as playing its role in supporting national policies, developing research programme methods, promoting the sharing of practices and experience on a global platform and to develop a regional knowledge hub for climate adaptation and mitigation practices in agriculture. This includes creating a cross-country database that keeps climate change impacts towards agriculture on track, documenting effective policies and practice on climate adaptation, as well as developing a core of experts from the academic world, government and civil society groups, who can assist in sharing practices and knowledge.

Conclusion

The challenge of the 21st century is that the human population must learn to act and think as global species. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how quickly humans can make drastic changes to their lives, societies, economies, and industries when the survival of the community is at stake. Stabilising atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions, avoiding catastrophic global heating with greenhouse gases emissions, and possibly even reversing some of the damage done, is a challenge that orders a magnitude of greater complexity. Climate change impacts are being seen and experienced everywhere to some degree, and to cope and live while adapting to it requires major efforts at all levels. A sustainable food system is the central piece of humanity and without enough action from now onwards, future generations will continue to face food insecurity in addition to the climate crisis happening. A resilient food system must be financially equitable, supportive of the entire community and it must minimise harmful impacts on the natural environment. Implementing

agroecology across organisations and nations for agriculture development requires broad cooperation and diverse approaches in attaining sustainable agriculture or climate-smart agriculture.[12] While there are many other different avenues to obtain greater food systems resilience in achieving food security, agroecology offers the possibility of a win-win solution, tackling the climate crisis as well as attaining a sustainable food system and production simultaneously.

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Climate Change Commitment Demands a Whole-of-Nation Approach

By Siti Hasnaa Binti Shaharun

Addressing climate change is a challenge that requires a multifaceted approach as underlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in August 2021 unveiled the "code red for humanity" as data indicated a possible rise of global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial level within a decade – breaching the goal set during the 2015 Paris Agreement. The Accord is committed to keep the increase of global temperature to below 2.0 degrees Celsius and preferably below 1.5. According to the report, the increase in temperature is due to people's activities.

By now, we should be able to realise that climate change is a threat multiplier for global security. The relationship between climate-related risks and other issues such as politics, security, economy, and social cannot be ruled out. For instance, a peaceful nation could experience social unravelling, health consequences, and human migration if climate change threatens the nation's food security. Therefore, a shift in foreign policy is crucial in attaining climate goals since the actors involved should not only confined to the scope of environment but also beyond. Further repercussion of climate change could be mitigated if there are immediate countermeasures that reduces large-scale greenhouse emissions.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call for us to be more prepared for a future global crisis like extreme weather. Although Malaysia's greenhouse gas emissions are only at 0.7 per cent of the global total, there is dire need to emphasise climate change diplomacy as a strategy in the foreign policy framework. In view of the disastrous effects of climate change, it must also be considered as a foreign-policy priority and cannot be addressed with a compartmentalised approach.

Malaysia and Climate Change

Climate change is an existential issue for Malaysia. According to the Climate Risk Country Profile Report by the Asian Development Bank, it is anticipated that by 2100, the sea level surrounding Malaysia will increase by 0.7 metres. This will consequently result in the loss of 3,700 square kilometres of coastal land, mainly affecting Sabah and Sarawak. Meanwhile, the Southeast Asian region recorded the highest figure of natural disasters that occurred worldwide over the last 30 years, with 90 per cent of them categorised as climate-related disasters.

In Malaysia, addressing the climate crisis will require involvement of all actors, including those outside the energy and environmental community. This will allow for the development of new strategies that place climate change as a central pillar in non-climate-related organisations, structures, and institutions. In this respect, more focus could be given to international engagements to highlight domestic efforts.

At the international level, Malaysia will need to continue promoting its position as a leading advocator of climate change. Previously, Malaysia was a strong advocate for the Antarctic Resolution, a global effort to safeguard the environment. However, in April 2021, Malaysia was excluded from the United States Climate Action Summit where 40 countries, including neighbours Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam were invited. By focusing on international

engagements, Malaysia may be able to better position herself as a key regional leader for climate change commitments.

Emphasising Climate Change Policy

Malaysia is a developing country, and it is high time that it balances development with environmental concerns. There are other issues that require the government's attention, but climate change policy is one that cannot be ignored. Climate change impacts transgress borders hence, climate change diplomacy will play a significant role in addressing this concern. The risk for climate change is immense for it to be reduced to a marginal role, where it is only being advocated by climate officials in climate-specific policy contexts. It should be integrated into national policies in the phases of planning, implementing, monitoring, and reporting. The incorporation of climate change into government policies could be featured in areas related to geopolitics, economy and legislation.

Geopolitics

There is a growing trend in Europe for the fight against climate change especially with the recent catastrophic events of wildfires in Greece and major floods in Germany. Malaysia should not be left behind in advocating climate change as a number of climate change disasters have been observed in the country over recent years. Malaysia has experienced an urban hit phenomenon due to urbanisation (less discussed) and severe floods. The government should leverage climate change diplomacy in pursuit of building stronger relations with other countries. Malaysia could cooperate with burgeoning countries that seek to empower their standard of living and at the same time, fulfil international pressure to be climate-friendly in managing their land and energy.

Economy

Foreign leading advocates of climate change such as the EU are planning to impose carbon border tariffs on imports from countries taking inadequate climate change actions. Apart from that, climate-related regulations are also being imposed. Increasingly, major corporations that fail to resolve their climate change effects must face legal consequences. Therefore, Malaysia may want to adopt similar economic measures by promoting climate change actions by both the public and private sectors, while simultaneously building closer cooperation with emerging global economies.

Security

As Malaysia's Defence White Paper (2020) underscored climate-related threats as part of non-traditional threats, it signals the relevance to accentuate climate change policy across the country. In the area of security and defence, it would be beneficial for Malaysia to refer to the work of their international counterparts, such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in integrating climate change into their security agendas. UNSC has acknowledged the environmental crisis as one of the security threats since 2007 meanwhile NATO has identified the fight against climate change as part of its Agenda 2030.

Legal

The emphasis on climate change diplomacy will likely put pressure on other related ministries to draft bills related to protecting the environment. Malaysia has yet to ratify

Flood in Penang

Source: https://climatechange.searca.org/news/harvested/malaysia/malaysia-climate-change-behind-penang-s-devastating-floods

the climate change act despite being a signatory of the Paris Agreement. The effort is still ongoing since Malaysia has been benchmarking the United Kingdom's Climate Change Act 2008 as a model reference for drafting its own Climate Change Act in the effort to reduce carbon emissions. The highlight of the United Kingdom's Climate Change Act 2008 is its incorporation of the targeted carbon emission reduction.

Public Involvement

The climate change commitment however is not only in the hands of policy makers and bureaucrats. It requires a whole-of-nation approach involving the corporate sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and members of the public. The efforts cannot be undertaken in silos. Federal government and state governments' priorities and aspirations must be streamlined to achieve the desired climate target. For example, state governments' focus on the development of forest for development and economic goals despite the grandiloquence to safeguard forests. The initiatives undertaken by several Malaysian states to manage waste accordingly should be reviewed and expanded across the country to ensure its effectiveness. With better control and enforcement, such initiatives can

be accomplished as a step to manage carbon emission.

Localising SDGs is a method to cultivate awareness on the importance of the goals. Multistakeholder partnerships could stimulate concerted efforts to preserve the environment. An effective partnership could also help to manage resources and expertise in climate-related issues. Moreover, any information gap can be reduced considering the low level of public awareness on the issue of climate change. Only factories are being condemned for risking the environment without realising that other human activities could also threaten the climate.

The awareness and actions could begin at home as we could not repudiate that a small step could propel a greater impact. Making sure electricity is turned off when not in use, avoiding food wastage and less usage of paper are some of the ways that could help to save the earth. The reduce, reuse and recycle campaign should be revived to educate people on how they can contribute to protect the environment. Such habits can start from young as we need children to understand that preserving the earth will determine their future livelihoods.

Heading Beyond Traditional Policy

To pursue climate change policy, it requires a whole-of-nation approach to entrench the goals into the system. The government has put an emphasis on environmental sustainability in the Twelfth National Plan (RMK-12) as a mechanism to support the green agenda in the country. Such initiative requires the support from the people, as it will be a daunting challenge to materialise the goal. Malaysia's effort in submitting the SDG Voluntary National Review which highlighted the measures and achievement undertaken to support the UNSDG should be commended.

Malaysia has the potential to be recognised, at least in the Southeast Asian region as well as among developing countries, as an important and influential nation in advocating climate change commitments. Such commitments would definitely get Malaysia closer to achieving the goals of sustainable development and at the same time protecting her national interests. Malaysia could also be a leading G77 country in promoting a balance between development and managing the environment.

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LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE "FOCUS IN CONTINUITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN A POST-PANDEMIC NEW NORMAL"

"Focus in Continuity: A Framework for Malaysia's Foreign Policy in a Post-Pandemic New Normal"

was launched on 7 December 2021 by YAB Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri, Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Framework serves as an extension to the previous Foreign Policy Framework of the New Malaysia and complements the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Strategic Plan 2021-2025, the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021-2025), and the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030.

The Framework sets out the priority areas of Malaysia's foreign policy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and aids the conduct of Malaysia's foreign policy. The priority areas include:

- Revitalise Malaysia's Links to the Global Economy
- Health Diplomacy
- Digital Economy
- Cybersecurity
- Cultural Diplomacy
- Peaceful Coexistence
- Upholding Multilateralism
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Let's Talk Newsletter is a series of publications based on the priority areas and complements IDFR's talk show series with the same title – Let's Talk.

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