

United Nations Development Programme



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Speech

**Launch of UNDP's
Human Development Report 2007/2008
*"Fighting Climate Change –
Human Solidarity in a Divided World"***

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Yang Berhormat YB Dato' Sri Mohd. Effendi Norwawi, Honorable Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia

Y. Bhg. Tan Sri Razali Ismail, President, WWF Malaysia

Mr. Zukifli Othman, BP Malaysia

Dr. Sundari Ramakrishna, Coordinator, MENGO

Prof Mazlin Mokhtar, Director, LESTARI, UKM

Mr. Steven Wong, Assistant Director-General, ISIS

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Members of the media

Selamat pagi dan salam sejahtera kepada semua para hadirin sekalian.

On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the national launch of UNDP's flagship publication, the Human Development Report (HDR) 2007/2008.

My sincerest gratitude to the Honourable Minister, YB Dato' Sri Mohd. Effendi Norwawi, for taking time off from his very busy schedule to join us for this important event. Dato Sri's gracious presence here this morning is a strong signal that climate change and its linkages with human development is a top priority focus of the government of Malaysia.

I would also like to express my warm appreciation to Datuk Wentworth and British Petroleum, for partnering with UNDP to create greater awareness about climate change and for co-sponsoring this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Climate change is a high priority development focus that is squarely at the forefront of international and national concerns. The debate has shifted from questions about whether we can do anything about climate change to the conviction that we cannot afford not to do so. This year's HDR, entitled, "*Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world*" sends a message that we must work together to chart a pathway toward sustainable development.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General, has identified climate change as the biggest issue facing humankind. At the G8 Summit in June 2007, the Secretary-General stated, "We have an ever-expanding arsenal of technologies to address the threat [of climate change] and also have significant resources at our disposal. What we are desperately in need of, at this time, is political will at the leaders' level to make significant emissions reductions and to help countries adapt to climate change."

Earlier this year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), representing over 150 countries, unequivocally affirmed the warming of the world's climate system and linked it directly to human activity. Its report painted a dire picture of an escalating global emergency, including that:

- The 10 warmest years on record have been since 1990;
- Forest fires have raged in hotspots all over the world as global temperatures rise;
- Droughts and floods are becoming more frequent and the intensity of hurricanes and typhoons has escalated; and
- Temperatures around Antarctica have risen five times faster than the global average over the past 50 years, causing glaciers to melt.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The issue of climate change is multidimensional, cutting across all segments and sectors of society. The effects of climate change are especially critical to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and high human development. There is no trade off between meeting goals on economic development and meeting goals on the environment and climate change – tackling poverty is just not possible without also tackling climate change.

We know that the gains from global prosperity have been disproportionately enjoyed by the people in industrialized countries. We also know that they are responsible for most of the greenhouse gas pollution. Conversely, the consequences of climate change are being disproportionately felt by the poorest. Many developing countries lack the means to cope with climate hazards, and their economies tend to have greater dependence on climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, water, and coastal zones.

Collective action should be rooted in the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” for our shared future. International cooperation is an imperative. Tackling climate change requires scaling-up efforts to help developing countries invest and adapt to its immediate consequences. Rich and poor countries must be committed to finding solutions and creating a sustainable planet for all. Cleaner technologies do exist and they are affordable.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

According to the HDR, Malaysia's Human Development Index (HDI) improved to 0.811, over 0.805 previously, putting the country in the category of “high human development” for the 2nd time. This compares with a figure of 0.659 in 1980 and 0.723 in 1990.

With increased prosperity and greater urbanization, Malaysia will undoubtedly continue to adopt the carbon-intensive lifestyle of the developed countries. This implies increased carbon emissions from an ever-growing number of automobiles, factories, and power plants.

Malaysians, in their public and private capacities, must take responsibility for contributing to a sustainable future. There is a need to raise the awareness of citizens of all ages. Malaysia has made a positive start in reducing its carbon footprint, as demonstrated by its active participation at regional and international events on climate change, its progress and success in implementing the Clean Development Mechanism and the adoption of several renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. UNDP will continue to support such initiatives, including building capacity of national stakeholders.

Let me say in conclusion that UNDP hopes that the upcoming December 2007 Bali Summit will determine future action on mitigation, adaptation, clean technology, the global carbon market, deforestation, and financing responses to climate change for the period after 2012 - when the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol expires. The Summit will hopefully start an intergovernmental process that will lead to a new global agenda to fight climate change and improve human development.

Thank you.