

**United Nations Development Programme**



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Speech

**“Conference on Climate Change Preparedness:  
Towards Policy Changes”**

Richard Leete, Ph D  
United Nations Resident Coordinator,  
UNDP Resident Representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, and  
UNFPA Representative for Malaysia

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Hotel Nikko, Kuala Lumpur

Street Address: Wisma UN, Block C, Kompleks Pejabat Damansara, Jalan Dungun, Damansara Heights, 50490 Kuala Lumpur  
Telephone: 2095 9158 Facsimile: 2095 2870 E-mail: [registry.my@undp.org](mailto:registry.my@undp.org) URL: <http://www.undp.org.my>  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 12544, 50782 Kuala Lumpur

Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Azmi Khalid, Honourable Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Malaysia,

Yang Berbahagia Ms. Loo Took Gee, Deputy Secretary-General, Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications,

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Syed Hamzah Syed Othman, Chairman, the Energy Centre Malaysia

Marcel Alers, Manager, Climate Change, UNDP-GEF, New York,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished speakers and participants,

Members of the media

Selamat pagi dan salam sejahtera kepada semua para hadirin sekalian.

On behalf of UNDP, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to today's Conference on Climate Change Preparedness: Towards Policy Changes.

My sincerest gratitude to the Honourable Minister Dato Seri Azmi Khalid for taking time off from his very busy schedule to open this important meeting. Dato Azmi's gracious presence is a strong signal of the government's determination to help address the factors affecting climate change.

I would like to recognize and thank our partners, the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications and the Energy Centre Malaysia for working closely with UNDP in the planning and organization of today's 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.

Mr. Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary-General, has identified climate change as the biggest issue facing mankind. 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."

The Secretary-General has challenged the global community to work together to translate the growing scientific consensus on the problem into a broad political consensus for action.

Later this month, the Secretary-General will convene a special high-level meeting with world leaders on the eve of the General Assembly to galvanize political will for joint action on climate change ahead of the Bali talks in December.

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. Our effect is large and ever growing. The IPCC's seminal 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. In July 2007, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown, said in his address to the United Nations that climate change is as much an issue of justice as it is one of economic and social development.

The effects of climate change are especially critical to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As Brown states, "There is no trade off between meeting our goals on economic development and meeting our 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.

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.

Within the United Nations framework, there has been increasing efforts by members of the international community to find a formula to curb emissions growth, adapt to the effects of climate change, channel funding and investment, and harness technology to tackle global warming.

The current focus of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is to secure a new agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. The upcoming December 2007 Bali Summit will determine future action on mitigation, adaptation, the global carbon market and financing responses to climate change for the period after 2012 - when the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol expires.

UNDP-GEF has developed an Adaptation Policy Framework (APF) to guide developing countries in implementing policies and strengthening national mechanisms to cope with climate change. This framework seeks to harmonize adaptation measures with a country's additional, often more pressing, development priorities, such as reducing poverty, ensuring food security, and disaster management.

The 2007 Human Development Report, UNDP's flagship publication that will be launched in November will explore the linkages between climate change and economic and social development. It will reveal how climate change is expected to create long-run low human development traps.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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

Expansion of fossil fuel use increases emissions of carbon dioxide, impacts negatively on the atmosphere, and contributes to global warming and rising sea levels. As a broad generalization, 80 per cent of greenhouse gases are attributable to burning of fossil fuels and 20 per cent to deforestation. Because plants and trees store carbon dioxide and emit oxygen, planting forests helps reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases. Conversely, deforestation removes these benefits.

A sustainable environment is essential for achieving and sustaining economic growth, poverty eradication, and human development. Significant environmental improvements can be achieved by adopting energy-efficiency programmes and technologies in industry and commerce, especially in the transport and industry sectors, and by greater use of renewable energy sources.

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. Later this morning we will witness the launch of a publication on "Malaysia's Generating Power from Palm Oil Wastes," which demonstrates the highly

effective and strategic partnership between UNDP and our government counterparts in advancing sustainable development goals.

Let me conclude by once again thanking Y.B. Dato Seri Azmi Khalid for officiating today's event. I would also like to thank our distinguished panel of speakers, some of whom have flown in from abroad, for agreeing to share their expertise with us. Last, but not least, my appreciation to all present, for your support and contribution towards the success of this conference.

Thank you.