



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
Friends of the Earth Malaysia
For Environmental Justice

1, Jalan Joki, 11400 Penang, Malaysia
Tel No: +604 827 6930
Fax No: +604 827 6932
Email: foemalaysia@gmail.com
<https://www.foe-malaysia.org>

Letter to the Editor

12 August 2016

Malaysia Needs To Urgently Beef Up Its Climate Actions

With the adoption of the Paris Agreement, an international treaty for post-2020 climate action, at the Paris climate summit last December, signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are committing themselves to enhancing climate actions to halt further alteration of the climate system and its adverse impacts on human societies.

Malaysia, as one of the 197 Parties that negotiated and adopted the Agreement and subsequently was one of the 175 countries that signed the Agreement on 22 April in New York, will now have to walk the talk.

In the run-up to the Paris Conference, Malaysia, like many other countries had also submitted its climate action plan known as the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in which it declared its intention to cut its emissions 'by 45% by 2030 relative to the emission intensity of GDP of 2005'. This consists of a reduction of 35% on an unconditional basis and a further 10% conditional upon receipt of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building from developed countries.

The country has been consistent in defending the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC while negotiating the new Agreement, notably stressing that the Agreement is under the Convention, thus the obligations of developed countries in providing finance, technology transfer and capacity-building assistance to developing countries remain.

The call for the provision of finance is apparent from the Prime Minister Mohd Najib Abdul Razak's statement when pledging the 40 percent emission intensity reduction of its GDP from 2005 level by 2020 at the Copenhagen Summit in 2009 and the demand was reiterated subsequently on a number of occasions.

However, nearly eight months have passed since Paris and Malaysia appears to be lagging behind in accessing international funding provided by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the operating entity of the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC, aimed at helping developing countries to shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient sustainable development pathways.

Many developing countries have submitted funding proposals to the GCF which in turn has to date approved scores of projects and programmes close to US\$440 million. These funds are channelled towards mitigation and adaptation projects as well as strengthening the institutional framework of developing countries in order to develop suitable climate action plans.

In preparing to access the GCF money, as of May, 49 developing countries had accessed the GCF's readiness grant which enabled them to strengthen the institutional capacity of their national designated authorities (NDA) or focal point and to develop their country programmes. The NDA/focal point of Malaysia is the Environmental Management and Climate Change division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).

The GCF began disbursement of funds since last year. As an example, our neighbour, Vietnam, had its proposal to ‘improve the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities to climate change related impacts’ to a tune of US\$29.5mil approved at the last GCF board meeting in June.

Unfortunately, we have yet to see any proposals from Malaysia, neither for readiness grant, nor a project proposal, in the pipeline pending assessment or approval.

It is also to be noted that Malaysia is among the 12 board members representing developing countries in the GCF’s Board, which is the governing body.

On the technology front, Malaysia is also one of the 26 countries participating in phase two of the global technology needs assessment (TNA) programme supported by the UNFCCC. However, it is understood that Malaysia has yet to move on this programme since the launch in November 2014, straggling behind other countries in this region like Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

In the mean time, Malaysia has experienced climate change-related extreme weather events such as the 2014 year-end devastating floods that was estimated to have incurred damages amounting to hundreds of millions ringgit with the agriculture sector in the worst hit state of Kelantan alone recording losses of RM105million.

No official cost estimates had been made available of the recent heat wave but its impacts has surely been felt by the general public who are forced to install air-conditioners and paying more for electricity usage.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) urges the Malaysian government to pay attention to the challenges arising from the impacts of climate change that are coming our way and get its act together soonest by matching our demands with deeds.

The UNFCCC mechanisms which include the GCF and the TNA process can help Malaysia get its act together on climate change and do much more with the available finance and technology resources, including in beefing up its climate change division in the MNRE through availing itself of the readiness money via the GCF.

There are international resources available and Malaysia must follow the example of other developing countries which are taking climate change seriously and are accessing the GCF for the necessary financial resources and in addressing our climate technology needs.

There should be no more excuse for further delays. Hence SAM urges the Malaysian government to act now and act firmly and fast.

S. M. Mohamed Idris
President
Sahabat Alam Malaysia