

ELECTIONS '08 DAILY POLICY FACTSHEET #2: ENVIRONMENT

CPPS is pleased to bring to you its "CPPS Policy Fact Sheet" as a build-up to the Malaysian General Elections 2008. In this daily series between nominations and polling day, we will explore **key policy issues** that we feel are important in informing your voting decision. Policy decisions made by leaders have a direct effect on your life as a citizen, and the elections is this one crucial time you decide on your leaders. We hope these fact sheets will be useful policy briefs as you decide whom to vote for. Here's to an **educated and informed voting public** in Malaysia!

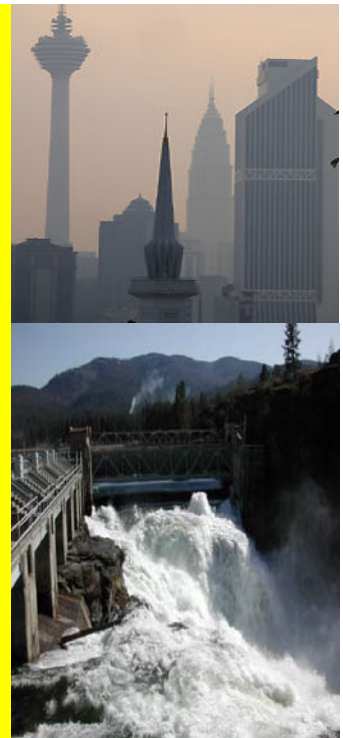
BACKGROUND

It is interesting to note that from a policy perspective, Malaysia was a pioneer in the 1970s in establishing a framework for environmental governance. However, an independent evaluation of the implementation of Agenda 21 in Malaysia for the World Summit of Sustainable Development (WSSD) by various local NGOs concluded, "in essence, **the words are in the right places but in truth the actions are not.** The commitment and focus to implement sustainable development practices [are] not forthcoming."

While development is necessary, the government has to include sustainability in its development projects. In a UNDP-CPDS roundtable discussion, **Jeffery Sachs** cautions Malaysia's government that in the short-term the solution to poverty would be to cut down more trees and plant more oil palm and rubber. However, in the long term, it is very destructive. He cited Norway and Costa Rica as good examples of nations who have managed to protect yet exploit their resources.

While the Ninth Malaysia Plan's environmental management focuses on 1) air quality 2) water quality 3) marine water quality 4) Solid waste Management 5) Toxic chemical and hazardous substances 6) Cleaner Technology, **without these integrated into economic projects**, these efforts will yield little effect.

Other issues that also arise from the topic on environment are **poor resettlement schemes, illegal toxic dumping by international companies, and extinction of Orang Utans are other areas of concerns.**



FLASH POINTS



- **'06 Johor Flood:** More than **110, 000 people** were displaced.
- Flood victims were without clean water and electricity for days. There were reports of rise in water-borne diseases. looting was also reported after floodwater receded.
- **Bakun dam:** Cheap energy at what cost?
- The dam requires the displacement of an **ENTIRE** indigenous population:
 "no one has come forward to tell us (residents affected by the Bakun dam development) what is happening. We don't want to go against the Government. But if the Government wants the Bakun project, why don't they think of us? **They say this is development but we don't think that flooding our homes is development.**"
 — taken from "Compensation a thorny issue," *New Straits Times*, (May 18, 1994).

- **Orang Asli Reserve** at Bukit Lanjan was transferred to the Emkay Group for well below market value.
- **Toxic Waste:** Malaysian authorities found a new stockpile of **5,500 metric tons of toxic waste** believed to have been illegally shipped from Taiwan in June 2004.
- Greenpeace says the case is more evidence that rich countries are using developing countries in Southeast Asia as a "dumping ground" for their toxic waste. To read more: <http://www.uswaternews.com/archives/arcglobal/4moretoxi6.html>
- **Wildlife Extinction**—A three year genetic study by wildlife geneticists from Cardiff School of Biosciences has shown a **population collapse** in the **Bornean orang-utan**.

BASIC STATISTICS AND FACTS

Johor Flood

During the 2006-2007 period, the rainfall recorded in the city of Johor Bahru on December 19 amounted to **289mm** when the annual rainfall of the city alone is 2400mm.

The 2006-2007 flood disaster were considered as the costliest flood in Malaysian history, with the total cost of **RM 1.5 billion**.

Haze

On August 11, 2005 a **state of emergency** was announced for the world's 12th largest port, Port Klang and the district of Kuala Selangor after air pollution there reached dangerous levels (defined as a value greater than 500 on the Air Pollution Index or API).

Deforestation

Analysis of figures from Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) shows that Malaysia lost an average of **140 200 hectares (0.65%)** of its forest areas. FAO says that forests still cover more than **60%** of the country. However, only **11.6%** of these forests are considered pristine.

Orang Utan

According to WWF, **1000 Orang Utans are poached each year**. For more details, read <http://news.mongabay.com/2005/0806-orang.html>

Waste Management

Malaysia's 26 million people generate about **six million tones** of sewage every year, most of which are released into the rivers.

Only **1-13%** of our solid waste are recycled. The bulk of our waste goes to the **230 landfills, which are close to overflowing**.

CO2 Emissions

In 1990, our total CO2 emission (MT CO2) was 55.3 but in 2004, it was Measured to be 177.5. That is a **221% increase** in just 14 years.

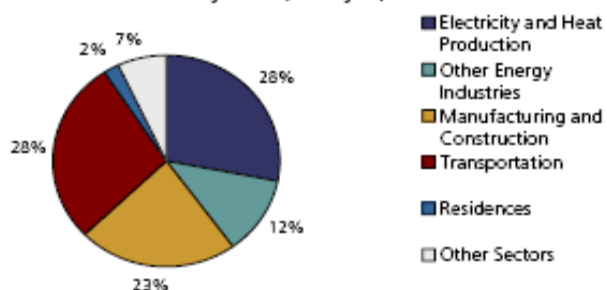
Water and Sanitation

94% of Malaysia's population uses **improved sanitation**. In 2004, it was recorded that **99%** of the population uses **improved water source**.

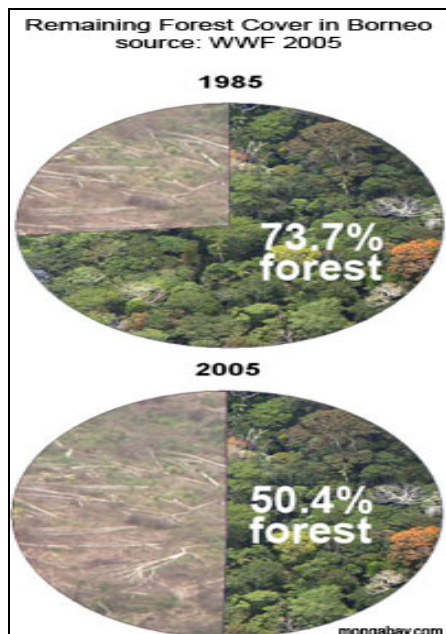
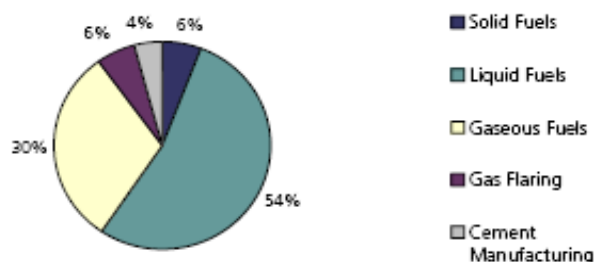


VISUALS

CO2 Emissions by Sector, Malaysia, 1999



CO2 Emissions by Source, Malaysia, 1998



Country	Rate of Change
Malaysia	85.7%
Cambodia	74.3%
Burundi	47.6%
Togo	41.6%
Nigeria	31.1%
Sri Lanka	25.4%
Benin	24.1%
Brazil	21.2%
Uganda	21.0%
Indonesia	18.6%

Rate of Change in Total Deforestation Rate 2000-2005 period vs. 1990-2000 period

Districts	People affected	Families affected	Relief centres
Johor Bahru	7,645	1,824	12
Muar	4,580	1,076	18
Batu Pahat	42,159	9,799	121
Segamat	4,813	1,260	15
Kluang	12,543	2,893	39
Pontian	2,577	649	13
Kota Tinggi	14,281	3,162	40
Mersing	8,727	1,876	20
Total	97,325	22,539	278

Disaster Management in Malaysia: Statistics on the flooded districts in Johor state

Party Standpoints:

- **Vision 2020** stresses environmental conservation requires that Malaysia must also ensure that our valuable natural resources are not wasted and our forest resources must be capable of regeneration while yielding to the needs of our national development.
- **Ninth Malaysian Plan:** the Government will place emphasis on preventive measures to mitigate and minimise pollution. The promotion of sustainable natural resource management practices in relation to land, water, forest, energy and marine resources, will be intensified. There will also be **closer cooperation with stakeholders and NGOs** in addressing environment and natural resource concerns.
- **DAP's** shadow budget proposes **Green Tax** also known eco-taxes. This will be a NEUTRAL revenue for the government and will be offset by reduction in income taxes.
- Also, companies that initiate R&D technologies innovation to reduce pollution and waste will be granted **DOUBLE tax deduction relief**.
- **PAS's Manifesto** states that it will involve the government, political parties, and civil societies / NGO's so that they are actively participating in the environmental preservation
- **BN's manifesto** states the party's determination to cultivate an enthusiasm for appreciating and preserving of the environment
- **People's Declaration** wants to work towards the standardisation of laws relating to forestry and logging among the various states and establish an independent inspection system to ensure that all these laws are firmly implemented.

What has been done:

- The incumbent government has responded to ineffective treatment of effluents from agro-based industries with a **progressive reduction programme** which has produced positive results.
- **Privatization of solid waste management** has raised garbage collection standards and seen more positive customer satisfaction.
- As part of the incumbent's initiative to improve its **stormwater management**, the **Smart Tunnel** was built at the cost of RM 1.887 billion.
- Although **Bakun dam** is able to answer the needs of Malaysia's energy demand scenario, research has argued that it **failed** to fulfill the social, ecological and environment dimensions of **sustainable development**.
- The incumbent government has adopted an **integrated water resource management** approach to optimize water management.
- To address the necessity of requiring environmental impact assessment (EIA), we have the **EIA Order 1987**. However, only 27% of its reports reviewed in 2004 were found to use satisfactory methods.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Proper incentive measures** (economic incentives) must be in place if the private sector and communities are to be encouraged to support sustainable development objectives.
- **Smart partnerships** based on consultation, dialogue, mutual trust and transparency between government, the private sector and communities are encouraged.
- **Resettlement schemes** should be accompanied by an assessment scheme to ensure that those who fall under such schemes are fairly compensated and well-adjusted to their new environment.
- **Open accountability** from both government and the private sector should be enforced and findings of open examination of large projects should be made **accessible** to the public.
- More concerted efforts should be shown in providing means and education processes necessary for recycling and reducing litter and pollution through **ALTERNATIVE waste management technologies**.

How Well Do You Know Your Candidate?

Questions to think about:

1. What has the incumbent candidate/party done in respect to improving disaster management in the country?
2. What measures would you hold/expect the next environment minister to advocate for more sustainable economic development?
3. What concrete measures and strategies outlined by each of the candidates in order to create a better environmental policies?
4. What policy recommendations has the candidate provided in order to the preserve biodiversity of our country?