



03 JUL, 2024

FORGING A PATH FORWARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

New Straits Times, Malaysia

PUBLIC BUY-IN VITAL

FORGING A PATH FORWARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY

MALAYSIA, though a small country contributing only 0.8 per cent of the global emissions, can contribute to advancing sustainability, especially since we have given a commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

At a recent conversation on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues by Friends of Sustainable Malaysia, participants agreed that sustainable practices are a must for survival.

Moderated by Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid, Malaysia's own international sustainability figure, the conversation aimed to create more awareness of ESG in the country. The endgame is world peace and stability as articulated in Goal 16.

This can only happen through partnership and collaboration, as spelt out in Goal 17. ESG is the business equivalent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On the climate change goal, the world has failed to follow through on many agreed actions on global funding and the phasing out of fossil fuel. All agree the 1.5°C global warming limit is now history. Even the new target of 2°C is in doubt.

No way can we have a more inclu-

sive world when more people are falling into poverty. Conflicts among nations are also not abating, exacerbating global supply chains, raising food and energy prices, and threatening global sustainability.

There is no denying the critical importance to embed the SDGs in the daily lives of every citizen, starting from preschool.

School curriculum, and even the curriculum of all levels of educational institutions, must incorporate the SDGs.

More effort is needed to get public buy-in. This concept must be communicated in simple terms, convincing the public why sustainability is important for a more secure future.

First, explain clearly what we mean by greenhouse gas emissions or decarbonisation. Many still do not understand nationally determined contributions and Net Zero, among others.

Second, do more outreach to villages and laymen. International benchmarking and adopting best practices are also important.

Third, change our culture and behaviour to make sustainability a way of life, following the example of Sweden and other Nordic countries.

Fourth, embrace sustainability at all



The world has failed to follow through on many actions on global funding and the phasing out of fossil fuel. AFP PIC

levels through more effective outreach initiatives at every level of society.

As a nation, it is useful to do a stock take of what has been done and what more needs to be done. This task should not be left to the government alone.

Fifth, better communication is key. Poor communication can result in fragmented sustainability efforts, with stakeholders working in silos.

Inconsistent SDG communication can lead to mixed messages, causing misalignment among key stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors and the community.

Sixth, forge closer collaboration, partnerships, and knowledge sharing among the various stakeholders.

The government, academia, corporations — big or small — ordinary citizens, and civil society organisations (CSOs) need to get together to spread the message of the importance of sustainability.

Establish mechanisms to regularly

and transparently monitor achievements in pursuing sustainability initiatives.

And these should be shared with all stakeholders. More CSOs and universities should help improve public awareness.

Stakeholders need to connect the dots to ensure we talk to each other more often in pursuing the SDGs.

Enhancing public understanding and buy-in and getting all stakeholders involved is the way forward. The media has an important role to play, where messages should be simplified so that they are understood by everyone.

DATUK SERI MUSTAPA MOHAMED

Distinguished Fellow,
Sustainable Development Solutions
Network,
Sunway University;

PROFESSOR DATUK AHMAD IBRAHIM

Tan Sri Omar Centre for STI Policy,
UCSI University