

## **WELCOME SPEECH**

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Welcome to Sustainable Living in Malaysia – a seminar for individuals, communities and institutions – on the theme ‘Living within the Ecological Limits of One Planet’ , organised by the Environmental Protection Society Malaysia (EPSM), in partnership with Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ). We are delighted to have you here with us today.

The Planet Under Pressure conference of the world’s leading scientists in London in 2012 arrived at the following conclusions on the state of the planet.

- Higher levels of carbon dioxide
- Rising air and ocean temperatures
- Rising sea levels and ocean acidification
- Biodiversity loss due to land-use change
- Growing consumption of freshwater supplies and energy

In September last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the leading body of experts on climate change, said the atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased.

As a symptom, on November 8, last year we had Super Typhoon Haiyan ripping through the Philippines leaving a trail of death and destruction in its wake. With climate change continuing unabated and ocean temperatures rising, more of such extreme weather events can only be expected. And much as we would like to think otherwise, we will all be affected.

Ecological footprint analysis, a tool for measuring sustainable development, states we are in a situation of ecological overshoot of about 50 per cent more than the earth's regenerative capacity. In other words, we are consuming the resources of 1 ½ planets to the detriment of the future generations.

From these scenarios, it is clear we cannot continue with our lives and lifestyles in a business-as-usual scenario. There has to be a shift towards sustainable living within the limits of one planet.

EPSM's SLiM seminar series, as part of a project funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme office in Malaysia, is a response to this call to action. We are delighted to continue with our capacity building seminars' series in Petaling Jaya today after a successful seminar in Kota Kinabalu on November 26 last year.

This project also incorporates measuring the ecological footprint of Malaysian households, including a few centres in Selangor including Petaling Jaya. This will be discussed in session 4 of the seminar.

As Malaysia is already an urban nation with more than 70 per cent of its people living in towns and cities, local authorities and communities can play a vital role in implementing sustainable living. Getting it right in the cities and urban centres is a major step towards getting it right for our country.

In designing this seminar, EPSM aspires for it to act as a call for action by all stakeholders in the Klang Valley, and beyond, to reduce our carbon, water and food impacts. We also hope it will be a catalyst for the State Government and MBPJ to revisit their previous pioneering initiatives with Sustainable Selangor at state level and Local Agenda 21 in Petaling Jaya. We will hear more about both initiatives in the seminar.

Starting with speakers who will provide the broader context of sustainable development, Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21, the seminar will then move on to case studies on reducing our footprints or environmental impacts. The speakers will highlight how they have reduced their environmental impacts and saved costs, while also improving their quality of life. This becomes particularly relevant in the context of the recent price hikes for petrol and electricity in particular.

At this juncture I must mention how pleased EPSM is to be partnering MBPJ once again to promote sustainable development. After all it was in PJ 17 years ago that EPSM launched its campaign to promote awareness of Local Agenda 21 and to work with MPPJ to get it to implement a LA 21 programme. The outcome of our efforts was beyond our expectations and you will hear more about this later.

EPSM acknowledges the presence of Dato' Teng Chang Kim and we are pleased that you consider our seminar important enough to warrant your participation. We urge you to review the serious work already done on the Strategies for Sustainable Development and Agenda 21 for Selangor, commission a study to bring them up-to-date, and then lead their implementation.

With regard to Petaling Jaya City Mayor Datin Paduka Alinah Ahmad, EPSM takes the opportunity to request you review your Local Agenda 21 programme as well as consider becoming the first city in Malaysia to calculate the ecological footprint of Petaling Jaya City. This can become the benchmark against which MBPJ can then measure the impact of all the positive environmental initiatives you have introduced in the city.

We are delighted to be hosting this seminar on the occasion of our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary today, after launching our series in Kota Kinabalu on November 26 last year. Our founding President and Advisor, Ir Gurmit Singh will briefly recap EPSM's history in a short while. After Petaling Jaya we will hold this seminar in Johor Bahru in March. In this regard, your feedback on this seminar will help us enhance this model for the next occasion.

Finally, we hope that in coming together to discuss ways and means of addressing the environmental and sustainability challenges facing us, EPSM will plant the seed that will encourage you to take steps that will lead to a sustainable environment, living well within the means of nature.

In conclusion, I would like to thank:

- Dato' Teng Chang Kim for your presence here today.
- Datin Paduka Alinah Ahmad and Mr Lee Lih Shyan for honouring EPSM with your partnership in this seminar
- David Lee and Lai Sook Mei from GEF SGP, for making this seminar a reality
- Our experienced speakers
- My hard working and dynamic EPSM Committee and team – Randolph Jeremiah, Joann Lim, Goh Meei Ying, Lalita Gomez, Lee Seit Yen, David Foo, Mano Maniam, Susheila McCoy, Ramkumar, Melissa Chin and Khaw Siok Kim
- And most importantly, you, the audience, for your participation and overwhelming response to this seminar

**I wish all of you a very useful and productive seminar.**