

RESPONSES ON SURVEY ON CLIMATE ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN MALAYSIA

KAMY Core Demands

- 1. Members of the Parliament and Ministers to treat climate change as a CRISIS and declare a “state of emergency”**
- 2. A just transition towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable economy**
- 3. Stricter Environmental Regulation and enforcement**
- 4. Access to data transparency, urging accountability and integrity in all levels of the Government**
- 5. Prioritize adaptations centered on the ecosystem and natural environment to combat the effects of climate change**
- 6. Adopt a sustainable system of land usage which prioritizes the environment and people. (People and Environment before Profit) **
- 7. Justice for the Orang Asli in matters relating to land rights based on the principles of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)**
- 8. Increase of climate literacy in Malaysia**
- 9. Sustainability and climate resilience as a precondition of new infrastructure and development projects**

1.0 Overview

We have less than 11 years to take climate action to limit temperature rise of 1.5°C or face worsening droughts, floods, extreme heat waves, declining food production and increased rates of extinction. A Merdeka Centre survey in 2016 found that only 32 percent of Malaysians are concerned about climate change.

Klima Action Malaysia (“KAMY”) calls for a more democratized approach to climate action and demands climate justice in Malaysia. To make this process more participatory, KAMY created a survey and invited the *rakyat* to share their views.

Out of 164 respondents, 82% thought that **all the core demands above were equally important and should be included in the Climate Change Act** proposed by the Minister of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change. We then drilled down on our respondents' views on various issues related to the environment and climate change. The following is a summary of the 164 responses we collected and how they are related to our demands:

3.0 Responses breakdown

3.1 Fossil Fuel Subsidies

Fossil fuel subsidies only received the support of 39% of respondents. Many noted that fuel subsidies were not beneficial in the long term as they create an unsustainable dependence on fossil fuels, inhibit innovations like the electrification of transportation, and decrease funding to improve public

transportation. However, some respondents noted that targeted fuel subsidies that help the needy are beneficial. (Demand 2)

3.2 Efficient Public Transportation

Efficient Public Transportation would likely decrease demand for private vehicles with only 26% of respondents claiming they would own one if public transportation could meet their commuting requirements. Besides the environmental benefits, several respondents noted that efficient public transportation acts as a hedge on inflation. Last mile connectivity issues need to be solved by creating infrastructure that encourages walking, cycling and electric scooters. For long trips, renting a vehicle was cited as a viable option. (Demand 2)

3.3 The ECRL alignment

The ECRL alignment was lauded for avoiding the destruction of the quartz ridge, but concerns were raised on whether the ridership would be sufficient to alleviate east coast congestion and that the new alignment would further fragment the proposed Central Forest Spine. Only 46% of the respondents thought that the ECRL adequately balanced environmental and public transportation objectives. (Demand 5 & 8)

3.4 Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”)

EIA processes were not being transparent enough as findings are not communicated to the public prior to approval. That EIAs do not require

consulting affected communities and independent third-parties (NGOs, academics) further reinforces this perception. (Demand 3, 5 & 8)

3.5 Renewable Energy

Renewable energy was being a largely untapped sector with the potential to create many green-collar jobs for Malaysians besides being strategically important for Malaysia's climate mitigation efforts over the long term. Malaysia's renewable energy target of 20% by 2030 were supported provided that appropriate technologies that do not harm the environment are implemented. (Demand 2)

3.6 Incentives for rainforest protection

Incentives to protect rainforests were supported by 95% of respondents, with common reasons being that forests provide ecosystem services such as cleaning air, providing water catchment areas and storing carbon. Some respondents also noted that improving connectivity of forests via the Central Forest Spine would also have the spillover effect of preserving Malaysia's biodiversity. (Demands 3, 4 & 5)

3.7 Coastal Ecosystems and Peatland Protection

Protecting Coastal Ecosystems and Peatland from conversion into agricultural land received support from 97% of respondents. Besides their role as carbon sinks, respondents noted that coastal ecosystems such as mangroves contribute to healthy fisheries and the livelihoods of coastal communities besides

providing protection against natural disasters. Therefore, developments on these ecosystems should be prohibited and previously degraded coastal ecosystems must be restored. (Demands 3, 4 & 5)

3.8 Land matters: Greater cooperation between Federal and State Governments

Greater cooperation between Federal and State Governments in land matters is necessary to achieve climate change mitigation and adaptation goals. Federal-led, top down efforts must respect that land matters are within the jurisdiction of state and local governments and lobby to win their buy-in via programs such as local capacity building. The current model of the Federal Government merely proposing guidelines and frameworks was perceived as lacking in implementation, creating inefficiencies and leading to unsystematic land management. Furthermore, as environmental impacts cross state boundaries, poor coordination between Federal and State environmental departments will hinder Malaysia's responsiveness to climate change. (Demands 1, 3 & 4)

3.9 Orang Asli/Asal

Orang Asli/Asal is key player in climate change adaptation and mitigation according to 89% of respondents. As their livelihoods depend on forests, the customary and traditional knowledge of Orang Asli/Asal is invaluable in preserving wildlife and the environment. Furthermore, their knowledge can be adapted into national land management strategies. (Demands 2, 5 & 6)

The persecution of Orang Asli/Asal must also be stopped and their rights as Malaysians for education and sanitation recognized. Furthermore, their right to self-determination in developing their communities sustainably and practicing their traditions must be respected to for inclusive climate justice. (Demands 2, 5 & 6)

3.10 Transparent climate action

A meaningful and inclusive climate change action via multi-stakeholder action and Free Prior Informed Consent “FPIC”, was supported by 100% of respondents. Besides creating a participatory platform for experts and affected communities in climate change decision-making, this is particularly useful in evaluating Malaysia's progress on meeting it's Nationally Determined Contributions “NDC” equitably and transparently. Although respondents were polarized on whether corporations should be included in this process, those who sought to include corporations saw it as giving the *rakyat* leverage to hold corporations accountable for their environmental impact as climate change mitigation is a collective responsibility. (Demands 2, 5 & 7)

3.11 Compulsory climate change module for schools

The creation of a compulsory climate change module for schools received 87% support. Respondents noted that early education would be the most effective way to increase environmental awareness and encourage sustainability as a lifestyle. Participants noted that module would need to integrate conservation studies, earth science and environmental science besides performing hands-on activities/volunteering work to reinforce learnings. (Demand 7)

3.12 Sectors requiring climate change prioritization

The top sectors requiring urgent and immediate policy changes to prioritize climate change are Agriculture, Construction and Education (Demands 2,3, 7 & 8). These sectors primarily deal with land use and must be prioritized for better management in the future.

4.0 Closing remark

It is the youth of today and future generations who will experience the full force of climate change, so we must call for concerted action now before the effects of climate change intensify beyond our ability to adapt.

Therefore, we call upon our Government to recognize the existential and civilizational threat posed by climate change and increase its ambition to avoid this unfolding disaster.

Inaction now means a bleak future marred by conflict, famine and mass migration; all things that Malaysia is not prepared for and that we hope to avert.

Sincerely,

Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY)

May 2019

Email: klimaaction.malaysia@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.klimaactionmalaysia.org/>