



CPPS Press Release

The Rio Agenda & Implications for Malaysia

The ASLI Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) hosted a Roundtable discussion on the theme “The Rio Agenda (green economy, poverty eradication and sustainable development) -Implications for Malaysia” on June 4, 2012.

About 20 people including think tank representatives, civil society, academics, private and public sector representatives participated. Among them were Prof. Datuk Yusof Kassim who moderated the discussion, and speakers included Mr Asfaazam Kasbani (UNDP), Mr Ahmad Kamal (EPU), Dr Hezri Adnan (ISIS), Mr Nithi Nesadurai (EPSM) & Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria (UKM/Proham). Others who participated were Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, Tan Sri Dato’ Dr. Michael Yeoh, Datuk David Chua & Ms Josie Fernandez (TI).

In the discussion a number of key points were discussed and implications were noted as follows:

First, that the Rio 2012 discussion is one of the most important conferences in the history of the UN on the theme of sustainable development. It reviews the commitments made by all the 172 participating nations of the world 20 years ago, when the Earth Summit was held in 1992.

Second that the theme for review and analysis is holistic in nature as it focuses on three inter-related and interconnected themes, namely green economy, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Third, that the governments of the world have been having long discussions in drafting a zero-draft entitled “The Future We Want” with some major differing views between developed countries and developing countries on the issues pertaining to “the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities” and the issue of commitment of developed countries towards the transfer of technology to developing countries.

Fourth, participants expressed concern over the level of preparedness of Malaysia for these discussions as there have been very little public discussions on these themes. We do hope that the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment YB Dato’ Sri Douglas Uggah Embas who is attending the Convention as Malaysia’s



representative manages to convey Malaysia's stance and bring back some interesting ideas. The UN has publically announced that 18,000 people will gather at Rio and 100 heads of state or government have already confirmed their attendance.

Fifth, participants noted that Malaysia can make a major contribution to the Rio discussions based on our national track record of poverty eradication and inclusive development through aggressive state intervention with public policies centred on growth with equity and the cooperation of the Private Sector.

Sixth, participants noted the immediate need for institutionalising a framework for sustainable development as well as the need to redesign agencies in order to be better equipped and more efficient when it comes to introducing, implementing monitoring and evaluating policies in the area of green economy and sustainable development.

Seventh, participants also noted some clear neglect and violations on forest management and its impact on indigenous people in Malaysia , that have to be rectified . One example cited were the issues surrounding Tasik Chini and the impact of timber logging and mining on the ecology, biodiversity and livelihood in that region. Serious focus and compliance to UN standards must be adhered too in line with the Rio+20 agenda. Participants expressed an urgent need for greater political will in managing our forest and institute mechanisms to restrain excessive profit gains in the short term for long term neglect and destruction. The call for political action is for sustainable management of the resources and the empowerment of forest based communities.

Eighth, participants were also introduced to Agenda 21 and the Local Agenda 21 which was introduced in the first Rio gathering. While Malaysia introduced the LA 21 scheme in a number of local authorities it has not become a strategy adopted by all local authorities. Therefore Malaysia must undertake a serious impact assessment of urban development and enhance people development and participation at the local government level including reintroducing local government elections.

Ninth, the participants recognised the rich potential of the green economy and called on the Malaysian government to formulate a National Policy on Sustainable



Development which will be developed with a sustainability agenda with the partnership of all the stakeholders.

Tenth, there is an urgent need for the government to organise public discussions on these themes of sustainable use of the resource for the future of humankind. Greater awareness, participation in policy discussion, open debates will enrich our management of resources with a long-term view in perspective i.e. for the future generation.

Eleventh, CPPS is committed to also host a follow-up discussion on this theme especially to take stock of our contribution to the international discussions as well as to review our new commitments to manage our resources in a more sustainable way, on the 9th of July, right after the Rio Conference. For further information on this, please contact Ms Arlene Tan at arlene@cpps.org.my.

The RTD also affirmed that we should have greater commitment to protecting not only our natural resources but especially to raise the standard of living and quality of life of the poor and the lowest 40 % of our income groups.

Issued on behalf of CPPS by
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June 8, 2012

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