

Driving Green Economy for Malaysia through Green Technology and Green Culture

M. A. Zainul Abidin

Group Chief Executive Officer, Malaysian Green Technology Corporation (MGTC),
Persiaran Usahawan, Seksyen 9, 43650 Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor

Author's email: drmaza@greentechmalaysia.my

EDITORIAL

Copyright © 2017 Society of Automotive Engineers Malaysia - All rights reserved.
Journal homepage: www.journal.saemalaysia.org.my

In the world we live in today, issues of climate change and the need for sustainable solutions have become more prominent. During the agreement reached in Paris in December 2015, the world was unanimous on what needed to be done while the clock was ticking. Under such an agreement, every country shall implement its own five-year climate action plan in a bid to ratchet up ambition levels. Developed countries vowed to provide significant amount of money as well as technical support to help under-developed countries cut down on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change.

As a signatory nation to the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Malaysia has pledged to reduce 45% of GHG emission intensity of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030 as opposed to the 2005 level (Ab Malek, 2017). This comprises 35% on unconditional basis and a further 10% on conditional ground upon receipt of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building from developed countries.

Why did Malaysia make this pledge, you asked?

As the nation progresses toward becoming a high-income economy, our national development strategy must be in line with the megatrends of the world, especially climate change. Sustainable development has been the overarching goal of the international community to address issues arising from population growth, non-renewable resource depletion, energy dependency, etc. To support sustainable development goals, green technology has been identified to catalyse Malaysia's sustainable economic growth. This is further backed by debates and discussions on environmental devastation and climate change that have further underlined the need to change the current economic model, and that green economy is the way forward.

When it comes to describing 'sustainability' in our world, we need to be mindful of three main pillars, namely economic, social and environmental pillars. These pillars are an interconnected set of concepts that, when taken together, can form a solid ground for decisions and actions to be made. By understanding this, every strategic direction to be implemented must pass through three gates, i.e. "Will this protect the environment?" "Will this harm the

economy?” “Will this improve the quality of life of the people?”

Although all three pillars are equally crucial to support sustainability development, the economic pillar has been identified to have the most significant impact because when the economic aspect is taken care of, automatically the social aspect shall be well-guarded, thus leading to the protection of the environmental aspects.

As the implementing agency under the purview of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA), Malaysian Green Technology Corporation (GreenTech Malaysia) realises the importance of having a strategic direction to support the nation's sustainability development goals. Hence, the Green Technology Master Plan (GTMP) was recently launched to chart the path toward realising our ambition for a green economy (KeTTHA, 2017). The GTMP provides actionable plans to support the National Green Technology Policy, and aligns the existing GT-related policies with the strategic direction of the 11th Malaysia Plan up to the National Transformation Plan 2050 (EPU, 2015; ASM, 2017).

With the GTMP in mind, GreenTech Malaysia has redefined the organisation's purpose to champion green economy through green technology and green culture, through multi-phased concerted efforts involving all the six sectors, namely Energy, Manufacturing, Transportation, Building, Waste and Water that are primary carbon contributors to the country. The redefined purpose allows GreenTech Malaysia to develop more holistic economic plans for the country with shared goals and co-ordinated policy instruments.

In driving green economy, GreenTech Malaysia believes in the power of attracting green investment in GT catalysts projects as key initiative. It is anticipated that by 2030, green businesses will contribute approximately 1.5% to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – a projection supported by commitment toward realising the targets, proper execution of policies and monitoring mechanism to keep track of green business performance, increase of exports as well as cooperation from private sectors. Decoupling economic growth from carbon emission has the added benefit of ensuring that Malaysia remains competitive as an investment destination as the country keeps pace with other economies that are aggressively pursuing it.

Additionally, GreenTech Malaysia has also made it a priority to create a vibrant green market through local SMEs and entrepreneurship programmes, R&D, and policy research on firming green economy through environmental fiscal reform. To add to that, the embedding of green culture aspect in Malaysians' daily lives through inter-organisation grass root engagement and outreach programmes are of equal importance because the work to make sustainability as part of our identity begins at home and school. Malaysia needs to graduate from a phase of technology adaptation and adoption toward greater home-grown innovations in green technology, and all these need to be instilled at a young age.

In summary, all parties be they from the public or private sector, SMEs, entrepreneurs, and even individuals have crucial roles to play in realising Malaysia's goals to become an inclusive and developed nation, in support of the pledge we made as well as the vision of an ideal sustainable world driven by green economy through green technology and green culture. We may not be even mid-way to the vision, but the most crucial part is taking the first step. Clearly, we can all agree that Malaysia has done just that, while striving to take many more steps with the pre-defined end in mind.

REFERENCES

- Ab Malek, B. (2017). National Green Technology Masterplan with Special Focus on Energy Sector. Presented at 'Day Out with CEO' 2017, 20 November 2017, Johor Bahru, Malaysia.
- ASM (2017). Malaysia 2050 Smart Communities. Akademi Sains Malaysia. Retrieved from <http://www.akademisains.gov.my/download/Malaysia%202050%20Smart%20Communities%20Presentation%20MATRADE%2026th%20January%202017.pdf>
- Climate Focus (2015). The Paris Agreement Summary. Retrieved from <http://www.climatefocus.com/sites/default/files/20151228%20COP%2021%20briefing%20FIN.pdf>
- EPU (2015). Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016-2020 – Anchoring Growth on People. Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Putrajaya, Malaysia.
- KeTTHA (2017). Green Technology Master Plan Malaysia 2017-2030 (GTMP), Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA), Putrajaya, Malaysia.

** Dr. Mohd Azman Zainul Abidin has assumed the position of MGTC's Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) since May 2nd, 2017. He was Advisor to the Society of Automotive Engineers Malaysia (SAEM) for the 2015-2017 term, after serving as the Chairman of SAEM for the 2013-2015 term. Dr. Mohd Azman remains as one of the Associate Editors of the Journal of the Society of Automotive Engineers Malaysia (JSAEM).*