

POSITION PAPER

MALAYSIA

Taking a step back and observing our world's food system from a wider perspective, Malaysia has noticed the crucial need of a drastic change in the way of producing and consuming. Our world's current agricultural system was once seen as a solution to maintain, or achieve in certain cases, food security. However, it quickly showed its detrimental impacts on our environment as well as on our health: contributing to pollution and climate change, destroying biodiversity which used to naturally bring fertility and resilience to the soils, leaving millions of smallholders jobless and harming great numbers of growing children sensitive to chemical products.

The Malay government and people do not need to look at other countries to observe the destructive outcome. They also suffer the consequences such as polluted water, increased floods and mudslides as Malay soils are no longer capable of absorbing rain water because of deforestation, and the reducing biodiversity of the country.

The Malay leaders, Malay NGOs and even Malays as individuals immediately took action. Malaysia adopted for instance Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in 2004, a World Wildlife Fund initiative. In Malaysia, 128 members of RSPO have been transforming the palm oil industry in collaboration with the global supply chain to put it on a sustainable path. The formulation of agricultural policies, with the National Agro-food Policy (2011-2020) being an example, has enabled the agricultural sector to grow sustainably and contributed to economy development in Malaysia.

Wawasan 2020 is another example of a Malay project. It calls for the nation to achieve a self-sufficient industrialized nation by the year 2020. It is in line with Malaysia's New Economic Model, put in place on March 30 2010 by Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak. The government plans on developing this new model that will speed Malaysia's transition to a high-income country. The plan will emphasize ways to increase the income and productivity of workers by encouraging "knowledge industries". Eco-farming is one of these so-called "knowledge industries" and will naturally play a role since agriculture represents over 8% of the country's gross domestic product and employs over 11% of the labor force.

Supporting actions of the United Nations such as Agenda 21, Agenda 30 and the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals which consist in investing in a sustainable farming system not only to ensure a healthy future to our planet, but also to lift people out of poverty, Malaysia has created its first and largest sustainable agro farm in 2011. Inspired by the idea of its founders agro technology company IRIS Berhad and charitable foundation Koperasi Atlet Malaysia Berhad, 11 more eco farms and parks have been created in the region of Johor. This sort of development becomes more and more common every day owing to its great success. Not only do they provide employments and safe food without harming the environment or the animals but also attract a large number of "green" tourists who participate in Malaysia's economic development.

The delegate of Malaysia represents a country that knows it is possible to make a change for the better and that seeks to share its knowledge of this subject. "Governments of the world, states Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak, need to do more to raise public awareness of environmental issues, promote environmental education and develop environmentally sound technologies. Only in this way can we help to reverse a tide that is coming rapidly further inland and ensure that our children inherit a clean, safe and healthy planet". It is wished that negotiations will lead to a concrete solution to the doubts of certain countries about the benefits of eco-farming systems and the disastrous impacts of their current industrial systems.

Malaysia strongly advises every country to start conducting agriculture in a more humble way, reminding that the word "humble", just like the word "human", derives from the one and only "humus", Latin for "earth".