

Headline	Act now for a sustainable environment		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	14 Sep 2018	Language	English
Circulation	36,278	Readership	108,834
Section	Letters	Page No	19
ArticleSize	265 cm <sup>2</sup>	Journalist	N/A
PR Value	RM 14,376		



## RENEWABLE ENERGY

# Act now for a sustainable environment

**T**HE government has, for quite some time, shone its light on socio-economic issues of the country, and rightly so. However, what is often missing from the spotlight is the environment and sustainability aspect of Malaysia, and this is where I believe the government and youth advocacy in Malaysia can truly help uncover what is hidden.

Granted, the government has already taken baby steps to address environmental issues. Single plastic use and plastic straws are both being scrutinised by the government, with our Energy, Technology, Science, Climate Change and Environment Minis-

ter Yeo Bee Yin leading the front.

Federal Territories Minister Khalid Samad has also taken preliminary steps to enforce the use of biodegradable plastics and ban plastic straws in the future.

The first is the push for renewable energy in Malaysia, which is more of the government's role.

The United Kingdom has long stated its intentions of reducing electricity generation from high carbon-emitting sources and digging deep into the renewable energy sector.

This, strengthened by UK's Renewables Policy, has paid off. In the third quarter of last year, UK boasted a record percentage of electricity produced from renew-

able sources, up to 30 per cent.

With technology improving, the government should introduce Malaysia's own renewables policy, with tariffs for non-renewable power stations and encouraging the production of power from renewables by giving financial incentives.

Malaysia should aim to produce 10 per cent of its power from renewable sources by 2030, which will really push Tenaga Nasional Bhd to invest in renewables and research and development. Moreover, renewable energy technology is becoming cheaper as technology progresses.

The second is to introduce financial incentives for people who

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recycle. This is where youth advocacy comes in.

Due to mobile applications being popular with youth, we can start the culture of recycling with the new generation, introducing applications connected to vending machines placed around the cities, where a user is given a financial reward for every defined amount of plastics recycled.

This is already being practised in Norway and other Scandinavian countries where plastic pollution is an issue.

This could be a solution to clean up our roads, while promoting the recycling culture.

The most important thing, however, is the government's role in

connecting all the dots for this to work – from the moment waste is produced, to having it thrown into its own recycling bin, separated by waste type, to transporting and processing these waste.

If we are to ban plastics, do we have enough alternatives for consumers? What about our vendors?

Awareness is also crucial to clean up Malaysia and "greening" things up.

The government must pay attention to the environment and sustainability.

**MUAZ MOHD HASNOL**

Fellow, Perdana Leadership Foundation, Kuala Lumpur