

**UN to Help Deepen Malaysia's Connectivity with ASEAN and other Asia-Pacific Countries**

*Malaysia seeks new partnership with ESCAP to reshape technical cooperation programme and develop green technology policy*

Bangkok (UN ESCAP Information Services) -- Malaysia is seeking assistance from the Asia-Pacific regional arm of the United Nations to sharpen the country's technical assistance programme to make it more responsive to 21st century development cooperation needs, beginning with developing countries in Southeast Asia.

The request came from Deputy Foreign Minister Senator A Kohilan Pillay, who was hosting the first official visit to Malaysia by Noleen Heyzer, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), from 10 to 11 March.

Senior officials of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water also requested UN help to shape the country's "green technology policy," a priority initiative of Prime Minister Dato' Seri Tun Abdul Razak, who personally heads the newly established National Green Technology Council.

Malaysia's Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) was launched in 1980 to promote South-South cooperation through experience-sharing for human capacity building in developing countries. MTCP offers training and capacity building assistance on good practices in public administration, agriculture, poverty alleviation, investment promotion, information and communication technology (ICT)/multimedia and banking. After beginning with the original six member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), MTCP now sprawls across 140 countries.

ESCAP's recent initiatives to support ASEAN connectivity, and its role as convener of the UN's Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), which brings together the institutional resources of 27 UN organizations across the Asia-Pacific region, have drawn Malaysia's attention. Dato' Zainuddin Yahya, Director-General of the ASEAN-Malaysia Secretariat, expressed his appreciation of Dr. Heyzer's role in this endeavour.

According to Malaysian officials, the UN system can serve as a multilateral partner to identify the emerging needs of developing countries in areas such as green growth, energy security, water management, disaster preparedness, financial cooperation and achievement of the MDGs, and help the MTCP to focus and optimize the use of its resources. Malaysian experts will play a more proactive role by joining UN-led teams to specific countries to identify potential areas of technical cooperation and match them more closely with Malaysian experiences and capabilities. The arrangement will be reflected in a new Memorandum of Understanding between Malaysia and ESCAP.

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*Headquartered in Bangkok, ESCAP is the largest of the UN's five Regional Commissions in terms of its membership, population served and area covered. The only intergovernmental forum covering the entire Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP works to promote sustainable and inclusive economic and social progress. More information is available at [www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org).*

Malaysia is now accelerating its transformation from a middle income economy to a high income one under its New Economic Model (NEM). Norani Ibrahim, Director of International and Corporate Service Division at the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department, identified green technology as the prime driver of NEM, which emphasizes R&D, innovation, and manufacturing and human capacity building across all economic and social sectors to develop a new generation of environment-friendly technologies for future green growth. The goal is to reduce dependence on traditional products and services in which it is becoming difficult to remain competitive by moving towards knowledge-based products and services.

The Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water is currently elaborating the national green technology policy, focusing on minimizing energy consumption, promoting green technology industries, developing green technology research and innovation capacity, public education and awareness building on green technology, and financing green technology development. The main sectors of attention are energy, buildings, water and waste management, and transportation, including biofuels. In his 2010 budget speech, the Prime Minister announced a \$450 million fund to provide soft loans to green technology producers and consumers.

Noting ESCAP's major new initiatives on low carbon development pathways, sustainable energy security cooperation and solid waste management in cities, senior Ministry officials asked ESCAP to assist in the development of a "green technology roadmap" to chart a comprehensive plan of action for the coming years. ESCAP staff and experts from other Asia-Pacific countries will work closely with the Ministry and the Working Committees of the National Green Technology Council. The joint work will explore strategies to position Malaysia as a regional green technology hub for innovation, investment promotion, market development and technology cost reduction. ESCAP and the Ministry also agreed to co-organize the International Green Future Conference and Exhibition in May 2010. The event is intended as the first of a biennial series that Malaysia plans to host.

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