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**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

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MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**FOR**

**CLIMATE ACTION AND JUST TRANSITION TOWN HALL**

**19 SEPTEMBER 2024 (THURSDAY)**

**MONASH UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA CAMPUS,  
BANDAR SUNWAY, SELANGOR**

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Salam Malaysia Madani.

1. **Yang Berhormat Rajiv Rishyakaran**  
State Assemblyman of Bukit Gasing
2. **Yang Berbahagia Professor Dato' Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor and President, Monash University Malaysia
3. **Yang Berbahagia Datuk Darrel Webber**  
Climate Advisor, State Government of Sabah
4. **Professor Dr Adeline Johns-Putra**  
Head of School of Arts and Social Science and Chair of MCCCRH Malaysia, Monash University Malaysia

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. I would like to express my gratitude to Monash University Malaysia for your outstanding initiative in organising this **Climate Action and Just Transition Town Hall**. In a time when the world is grappling with profound environmental challenges, gatherings like this is not only vital, but they also symbolise hope: for collaboration, innovation, and progress towards a sustainable future. Monash University Malaysia has shown true leadership in creating a platform for these critical discussions, and for that, we are all thankful.
2. For that matter, to everyone here today—whether you are policymakers, academics, industry leaders, students, or concerned citizens—thank you for your dedication to this shared mission.

Your presence is a powerful testament to your commitment to addressing one of the most pressing issues of our time: the need for urgent climate action, and the pursuit of a just transition.

3. It is easy to be daunted by the scale of the challenges we face. Yet, I am heartened by the passion and resolve I see in this room. The fact that so many of you have gathered here today gives me great confidence that we are not alone in this fight. We are, rather, standing shoulder-to-shoulder in our efforts to ensure that our transition to a low-carbon future is not only environmentally sustainable but socially equitable. Together, we can and will make a difference—not just for ourselves, but for generations to come.
4. This town hall is more than just a discussion; it is a call to action. It represents an opportunity for us to reflect on where we are, to recognise the strides we have made, and to confront the difficult realities that still lie ahead. But above all, it is a space for optimism—because when we unite our efforts and our ideas, we have the power to forge a brighter, greener, and fairer future for all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

## **OVERVIEW OF MALAYSIA'S EFFORTS IN CREATING A JUST TRANSITION**

5. A successful transition to a well-functioning, inclusive, low-carbon economy occurs when it is just, ensuring that people have access to equitable social and economic growth opportunities, and no one is left behind.

6. Today, I want to address a vital component of our commitment to environmental sustainability: the concept of a "just transition." As we work towards a greener and more sustainable future, it is essential that we do so in a manner that is fair, inclusive, and equitable for all. How do we do this?
7. First, we must ensure fair treatment for every individual impacted by our transition to a greener economy. This means supporting workers in industries that might be affected by our new environmental policies, providing them with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive in this evolving landscape.
8. Second, we are dedicated to creating new economic opportunities. As we phase out activities that harm our environment, we will simultaneously invest in emerging sectors that promote sustainability. Our focus will be on generating new jobs and economic activities, ensuring that those who face displacement have clear pathways to new and meaningful employment. We must also realise that ensuring climate adaptation does not result in a fall in living standards as this will be crucial to maintain public support for it.
9. Third, social equity remains at the core of our efforts. We must address existing disparities and ensure that marginalised communities—those that often bear the greatest burden of environmental challenges—are not left behind. Our goal is to ensure that these communities also benefit from the transition, sharing in the opportunities and advantages of a sustainable future.

10. Fourth, we are to show commitment to support the communities that rely on industries transitioning away from harmful practices. Our approach includes providing the necessary assistance and resources to help these communities adapt and thrive in this new economic environment.
11. Finally, we at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) believe in inclusive planning. It is imperative that we involve all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process. Their voices and perspectives are crucial in shaping policies that meet the needs of everyone affected by the transition. We have, for instance, set up a youth-centric advisory panel on climate change because it is the future generations that have the most at stake in this situation. The sessions have been engaging and very productive and we're confident they will stay this way.
12. In summary, a just transition is about balancing our environmental goals with social and economic justice. It's about ensuring that as we build a more sustainable future, we do so in a way that is equitable, inclusive, and fair to all. Together, we can achieve our environmental objectives while fostering a more just and prosperous society for everyone.
13. In terms of my Ministry's part of the equation, the government has been working hard to put together the right policies, roadmaps, and initiatives in place to decarbonise our economy, especially the hard-to-abate sectors, without sacrificing growth and development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

**MALAYSIA'S ROLE AT WORLD STAGE IN JUST TRANSITION AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDAS**

14. The Paris Agreement acknowledges the importance of aligning climate change initiatives with human rights obligations and the broader aim of achieving sustainable development. As the push to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C accelerates, the transition towards a low-carbon economy will present new job and business opportunities, while also potentially disrupting more traditional labour markets across the entire energy value chain.
15. This is in line with the Paris Agreement which links just transition of the workforce to the creation of decent work and quality jobs. In implementing this concept, a whole-of-society approach to a sustainable future that is inclusive, equitable and just are needed. For Malaysia, this means incorporating just transition principles into our Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS) aspiration of achieving net zero by 2050.
16. As you are aware, Malaysia participated in the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, known as UNFCCC COP28 last year. At COP28, the Malaysian Pavilion was officiated by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, underscoring the importance placed by our nation's leadership on climate action and our commitment to the global climate agenda.

17. As a country party of the UNFCCC, Malaysia remains steadfast in fulfilling its obligations under the convention. We have made significant strides in implementing various initiatives to achieve our greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and national net zero aspiration. Malaysia officially submitted the Fourth National Communication (NC4) to the UNFCCC in May this year and is currently preparing the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) on GHG inventory achievements to be submitted to the UNFCCC by 31st December 2024.
18. Furthermore, I am pleased to inform you that we hope to have the Climate Change Act ready latest by next year. Additionally, the National Adaptation Plan preparation is set to commence in early 2025, with the funding support secured from the Green Climate Fund.

Ladies and gentlemen,

### **MALAYSIA'S EXPERIENCE AT COP28**

19. Malaysia had its largest-ever delegation for the COP28, with a total of 700 delegates, including government officials, the private sector and NGOs. Of this, 30 delegates representing various ministries and agencies attended the climate change negotiation processes. Many more were of course following the updates closely from home.

20. And there was of course our **Malaysia Pavilion**, with the theme of “Going beyond: Green growth, resilient community and sustainable planet”. The Pavilion received not only the support of various Malaysian corporate players but also many foreign visitors.
21. In my national statement on 9 December 2023 during the high-level session of the COP28, I mentioned that all countries must contribute to fighting climate change based on the principle of CBDR-RC. Malaysia has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity by 45% in 2030 compared to 2005.
22. I stressed that Malaysia had done many things regarding climate change, and we would do much more and be willing to be more ambitious if we had support from the developed world. And yet—while we recognise that the road ahead may be challenging, we remain resolute and determined to navigate the transformative pathway.
23. To ensure continuity in building Malaysia's image on the international platform and building on the success of our pavilion at COP28, we will bring back the Malaysian Pavilion at COP29 which will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to November 22, 2024. While there will be hard work ahead, we believe that COP29, which will reportedly focus on climate financing, will be a key test on whether both developed and developing nations can work together to ensure a just transition takes place globally.



24. There is a need for urgent action more than ever before. In an August 2024 Financial Times interview, Jonathan Adair Turner, Baron Turner of Ecchinswell, former Chair of the UK's Climate Change Committee and Chair of the Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) noted that the world can still achieve net zero but later than ideal because of political opposition. So the need for political will and cooperation, as well as public pressure to make it happen, is also urgent.
25. Our efforts will not stop in Baku. The Ministry is also making early preparations for UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, Brazil in 2025. As ASEAN Chair in 2025, one of Malaysia's focuses will be on climate change, and we will bring the voices of ASEAN countries to the UNFCCC Conference in Brazil.

Ladies and gentlemen,

## **MALAYSIA AS ASEAN CHAIR**

26. Malaysia will be the Chair of ASEAN next year. 650-million strong Southeast Asia—which is fast becoming the epicentre of the Asian Century and the shift in the global economy gravity east and southwards, will also be a crucial battleground in the fight against climate change. Our people, in this country and around the region, know all too well the ravages of climate-related natural disasters.

27. And given how increasingly important we are economically—the combined ASEAN will be the world’s fourth largest economy by 2030—what we do or fail to do in terms of climate change and energy transition could have a decisive impact in whether Asia, or even the world will succeed in addressing these challenges. 2025 will provide opportunities to network with ASEAN counterparts concerned about climate change. I pledge to do what I can in my capacity to help forge and nurture these linkages.
28. I also especially urge the young people here to consider ASEAN as a platform for yourselves. Yes, Malaysia is important. But any activism that is limited to national borders will necessarily be limited given how interconnected not only the world’s opportunities but also problems are. ASEAN is Malaysia’s future and if we want our country to lead in that future, our knowledge and networks in Southeast Asia must be strong. There will be many opportunities in the months ahead of our 2025 Chairmanship so watch this space.

Ladies and gentlemen,

## **CONCLUSION**

29. The government of course cannot do it all on its own in fighting climate change. It must be a national and regional, even global effort. All walks of life must play their part. Both and small companies must genuinely commit to SDGs and ESGs—the NIMP in particular is seeking to ensure Malaysian SMEs can navigate this.

30. We need the media and NGOs' help to both speak the truth to power and also to the public in terms of the science behind climate change. Universities like Monash should keep holding events like this, but also ensuring their course offerings match the changing economy, especially in relation to the energy transition.
31. And naturally, we will need the energy and enthusiasm of the young. We will need your moral compass to also guide the Just Transition, to ensure it is truly just. This government, especially NRES, is willing to listen and to learn.
32. I trust our discussions here will lead to action and collaboration. While my colleagues in government and I will do all we can to prepare Malaysia to meet climate change, it's a work that will transcend generations, the mantle of which you will all one day inherit. With your backing, we can provide what our children and their children will need to continue the fight to save our planet. Thank you.