



The Environment and Sustainable Development Balance : the Southeast Asian Experience

Presentation in Special Session 4 on "Green Environment and Sustainable Development for Emerging Economies" of the Conference on "Economic Crisis and Recovery: Enhancing Resilience, Structural Reform and Freer Trade in the Asia-Pacific Region" held in Singapore on 8-9 Oct 2009, organised by PECC, SINCEPEC and IPS

S Tiwari

Visiting Senior Research Fellow, ISEAS



Blaming colonial past no more an option(1)

- In the eighties and nineties countries blamed their former colonial masters for ruining their environment



Blaming colonial past no more an option(2)

“Developing countries face increasing pressure to develop their resources. This pattern of development is a direct legacy of their colonial past: to satisfy their colonial masters, unique ecosystems were plundered for mineral extraction and ..development..” Green Left Weekly issue #24 Apr 1991



Blaming colonial past no more an option(3)

- Countries are now responsible for running their own affairs and need to take their own decisions on managing the balance between the environment and sustainability.
- The same would apply to regional bodies



The Greening of Singapore(1)

- Greenest city in Asia
- Singapore has placed major emphasis on the environment
- In recent years the Singapore Government has introduced many initiatives aimed at guaranteeing a healthy and sustainable living environment



The Greening of Singapore(2)

- Building & Construction Authority (BCA) launched the BCA Green Mark Scheme;
- Intended to encourage Singapore's construction industry to focus on more environmentally friendly buildings with emphasis on sustainability in the built environment.



The Greening of Singapore(3)

- One of the most notable award-winning green projects in Singapore is the Marina Barrage



The Greening of Singapore(4)

- Marina Barrage –Unique engineering feat that boosts water supply by creating a reservoir and acts as a tidal barrier to alleviate flooding in the low-lying parts of the city and makes water activities and river cruises possible by providing a consistent water level all year round.



Greening of Singapore(5)

- Singapore has been extremely fortunate in having its greening pushed for at a very high level - none less than former Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew himself



Greening of Singapore(6)

- Presented are extracts from an ESCAP website which illustrate the vision, foresight and the determination of Mr Lee in this regard.



Greening of Singapore(7)

- **Personal interest of Prime Minister Lee in greening Singapore:** Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew became personally involved in the project of transforming Singapore from just concrete and steel to concrete, steel, trees, shrubs, flowers and parks. He surveyed the world for ideas, taking advantage of his travels abroad to look out for them and became knowledgeable about soil and vegetation, trees and drainage, climate and fertilizers



Greening of Singapore(8)

- **. The nature of the problem for growing grass in Singapore:** Lee was told that Singapore did not have a grassland climate in which rain fell gently from the skies. Instead, being part of an equatorial region, it experienced torrential rainfall that would wash off the topsoil and with it the vital nutrients necessary for strong plant growth. In an equatorial forest, with tall big trees forming a canopy, the rainwater drips down, but in Singapore, where the trees had been chopped down, it would come down in a big wash come down in a big wash.



Greening of Singapore(9)

- **Soil problems were managed with scientific methods:** But Lee was not one to let climate get in the way. Fertilisers would replenish the soil, and so began the task of making compost from rubbish dumps, adding calcium, and lime where the ground was too acidic.



Greening of Singapore(10)

- **Techniques for tree plantation in the city:** When expressways and flyovers sprouted all over the island, he had officials look for plants, which could survive below the flyovers where the sun seldom shone. And instead of having to water these plants regularly, which was costly, he got them to devise a way to channel water from the roads, after filtering it to get rid of the oil and grime from the traffic above. The road was split into two so there would be a gap in the middle with enough space for sunshine and rain to seep through and greenery and vegetation to thrive below.



Greening of Singapore(11)

- **The success was due to the leaders pragmatic and hardheaded approach:** Making Singapore a different city. That has been Lees constant obsession. Even when the difference had to do with trees and flowers, subjects which one would not normally associate with the man who has been at Singapores helm for 38 years, 31 of which he served as prime minister, his approach to the problem has been typical hardheaded and pragmatic.



Malaysia wants to go green(1)

- **A news item reports Malaysian Minister Datuk Mukhriz as follows:**
- **Malaysia Wants To Go Green**
- FRIDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2009 Developing nations require green technology transfer, Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Mukhriz Tun Mahathir. Notwithstanding encouragement of local innovation, Malaysia would still like to gain knowledge and have access to the technology available worldwide to green its....."



Malaysia Wants To Go Green (2)

- According to Mukhriz, the Green Industry (GI) involves not just the greening of industries but also the creation of businesses in recycling, water treatment, waste water and other related manufacturing equipment for GI. The Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry said this after opening the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability Summit 2009, organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI).



Malaysia wants to go green(3)

- He also was reported to have said that Malaysia was also collaborating with the United Nations' agencies like the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to green the industries.



Malaysia wants to go green(4)

- Malaysia's industry too is reported to be supportive of the country's greening effort.
- KUALA LUMPUR, 5 MARCH 2009 – Green architecture and infrastructure projects are to grow in Malaysia this year, says design software firm Autodesk.
- Autodesk Malaysia country manager CS Tan says: "Following the introduction—in April 2009—of Malaysia's first Green Building Index (GBI), a rating system for green building certification, we believe Malaysia is on the right track towards making sustainability part of the equation in our ecosystem."



ASEAN Cooperation on Environment(1)

ASEAN's environment and natural resource endowments are very important to it. Half a billion people in ASEAN depend primarily on these natural resource endowments for economic and social development and livelihood.



ASEAN Cooperation on Environment(2)

- Thus protection of the environment and the sustainable use and management of natural resources is considered essential to the long-term economic growth of the countries and the region.



ASEAN Cooperation on Environment(3)

- The ASEAN Vision 2020 calls for “a clean and green ASEAN with fully established mechanisms for sustainable development to ensure the protection of the region’s environment, the sustainability of its natural resources and the high quality of life of its peoples”.



Is ASEAN Environment Cooperation Succeeding?

- Despite a number agreements, Declarations, Resolutions and Working Groups environmental cooperation in ASEAN still requires much work
- Haze – Haze continues to be a serious problem area



State of Environment Reports(1)

- A State of Environment (SOE) Report reports on the condition of the environment, the major environmental issues being faced and identifies what is being done and should be done to improve the environment.



State of Environment Reports(2)

- A State of Environment Report appears to be a useful tool for countries to use to take stock – from time to time- as to whether the measures they are adopting are succeeding and if not what changes are necessary



End