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**Stakeholder Consultation in the Development of Climate Change Policy: Malaysia's Approach**

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**ABSTRACT**

Climate change is cross-sectoral in nature, transcending traditional takes on environmental issues, as it affects human well-being and economic growth. The impacts of climate change transcend all levels and sectors, whilst effective collaborative participation, grounded on indigenous and scientific knowledge should serve as a mainstay for institutional capacity building. Stakeholder participation and consultation is, therefore, a crucial component in a climate change policy process. While ensuring transparency in policy-making, improve communication and increase acceptance in long run, the participatory and consultative approach could also provide support to decision makers throughout the process. Given the scale of issues and options, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia in collaboration with the Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, is currently conducting a Policy Study on Climate Change, with a view to formulate a national policy to ensure concerted holistic responses to climate change challenges. The study adopts broad stakeholder participation and consultative processes. Stakeholder viewpoints gathered in overlapping phases at national and regional meetings, interviews and peer-review sessions provided crucial inputs to refining the study recommendations in formulating the National Policy on Climate Change for the country. Phase 1 was carried out through eleven meetings over a period of four years, focused on documenting viewpoints of over 1150 participants. Stakeholders were kept informed of the policy formulation during the Phase 2 and referrals were made throughout the process in seven meetings with over 400 participations in the last two years. Once the initial policy framework was derived, it was subjected to stakeholders' reviews; this during Phase 3 of consultations, and the activities covered seven meetings. Inputs were then reviewed to refine the national policy framework. At present the draft policy is undergoing the Fourth Phase of stakeholder scrutiny, prior to its finalisation for adoption by the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change.

**Malaysia's Vulnerability in the Climate Change Discourse**

The past records of Malaysia climate show similar trend that has been encountered globally as found in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessments (Bindoff et al., 2007; Trenberth et al., 2007). The country's temperature had increased 0.18 °C per decade for over 40 years since 1951 (MOSTE, 2000); whereas UTM (2007) revealed an average annual rise in sea level by approximately 1.25mm at a southern coastal site in the Peninsular Malaysia since 1986.

The climate conditions are projected to continue on an increasing trend (NAHRIM, 2006; Wan Azli et al., 2008). Modelling results estimate that temperature in Malaysia may become warmer by mid and end of the century. A substantial increase in monthly rainfall over the North East Coastal region and decrease in monthly rainfall in West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia may be expected. Future river flows in several watersheds in East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia were simulated as increases in hydrologic extremes when compared with their historical levels. By end of the century, a more

significant change in the annual rainfall may be expected in the western regions of Sabah and Sarawak.

Malaysia is rich in natural resource. Its economy has over the years inevitably tied closely to its unique resource endowments, including land, water, forestry and biodiversity as well as coastal and marine. The socio-economic development activities on agriculture, potable and irrigation water supply, ecological and ecosystem services, coastal infrastructure and marine resources are dependent and sensitive to climate conditions. While already faced with multiple stressors, the onset of climate change factors impinge on the sustainable development that rely on climate-sensitive sectors as it compounds the pressures on and alter the distribution and quality of food, natural resources and the environment associated with urbanisation, industrialisation, and economic development. Insights into such potential implications were gained during the preparation of Malaysia's Initial National Communication, where the sensitivity of several key economic and resource sectors was assessed against a range of plausible future climate (MOSTE, 2000).

Every 1°C temperature rise may cause 10% reduction in rice yields and prolonged drought conditions may adversely impact the current flooded rice ecosystem, putting national food security at greater risk (MOSTI, 2000). The oil palm plantation may be negatively affected in two scenarios: temperature rise that causes drought or increased rainfall that leads to flooding (Ramadasan et al., 2001). The increase in flood intensity and frequency would incur additional costs on water resources management due to the needs to adjust future flood mitigation plans as well as the existing flood mitigation schemes and drainage systems (Low and Ahmad Jamaluddin, 2001) The rise in sea level will lead to tidal inundation, shoreline erosion, increased wave action and saline intrusion, causing submergence of corals, loss of fisheries resources, plantation lands, and mangrove forests, and possible relocation of coastal infrastructure (Lee and Teh, 2001).

Whilst Malaysia recognises that climate change is a global challenge, which the threats historically stem from the emissions of greenhouse gas from developed countries, it also faces challenges arose from international socio-political obligations. As a rapidly industrialising economy with relatively higher per capita emission among developing countries, the country may be required to play greater role in near future and to face potential trade barriers on high carbon footprint products.

### **The Need for a National Policy on Climate Change**

Since the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) the environmental concerns are progressively being emphasised in development plans (Hezri and Hasan, 2006). Since then, many ministries formulated policies that have taken into account environmental concerns to different extent based on sectoral specific context and needs. Although sectoral in nature, these policies also contribute indirectly to addressing climate change (Muthusamy, 2007). The reviews of the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), the currently ongoing development plans, and several national policies reveal the programmes that directly address or indirectly contribute to managing issues of climate change adaptation and mitigation (Pereira and Tan, 2008).

Climate change is cross-sectoral in nature, involving more than merely environmental issues, but also affecting economic growth and human well-being (Pereira and Subramaniam, 2007). While the past and existing national policies and initiatives may have indirectly addressed climate change concerns under the context of sustainable development, the need to formulate a dedicated climate change policy is increasingly recognised. Therefore, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia in collaboration with the Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, had conducted the Policy Study on Climate Change. The aim of the study was to develop a national policy and strategies on climate change in fostering sustainable development in Malaysia to meet the needs of the country and respond to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

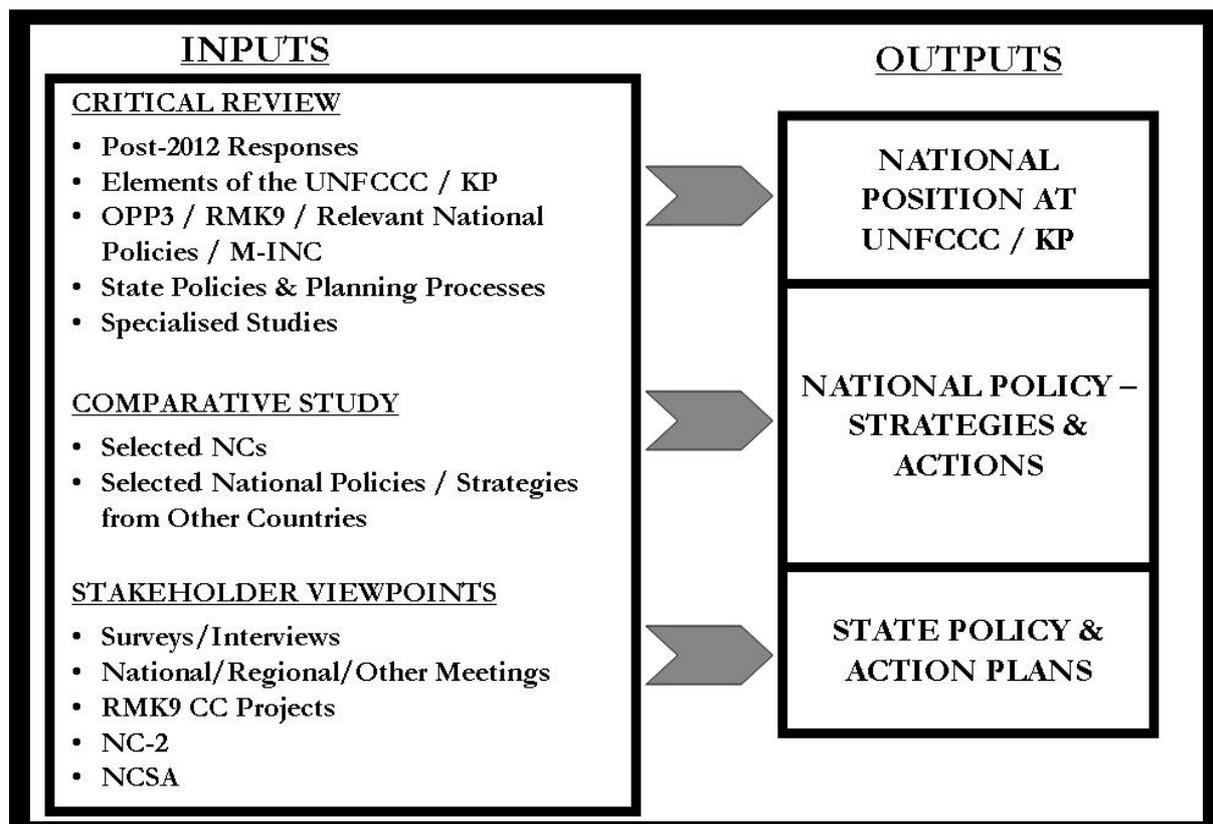
The study adopted a three-pronged approach to support the identification of national positions at the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol meetings, formulation of a national policy and action plan, and delineation of state level responses to climate change adaptation and mitigation (Figure 1). In the first cluster of activities, several international and local research papers and public documents were critically reviewed. These publications include those related to post-2012 responses, decision documents of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, Malaysia's Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3), Ninth Malaysia Plan (RMK9), relevant national policies, and Malaysia's Initial National Communication (INC). The second cluster of activities involved comparative studies of selected National Communications and national policies or strategies on climate change from other countries. Selected Annex I and non-Annex I countries were reviewed. The third cluster of activities focused on stakeholder consultation. Stakeholder viewpoints were collected through national and regional workshops, interviews and surveys. The sections that follow elaborate the stakeholder consultation undertaken in the study.

### **The Process of Stakeholder Participation and Consultation in the Policy Formulation**

The project adopted a consultative approach in drafting the national policy on climate change. Stakeholder viewpoints gathered at national and regional meetings, interviews and peer-review sessions provided crucial inputs to refining the recommendations on the policy. The whole process of consultation was guided by several principles. Stakeholders were consulted as widely and deeply as possible. Potential historical sources of information were traced and reviewed for pertinent inputs. The intention of the policy formulation was communicated and informed to stakeholders at early stage and during different forums. The outcome of the direct consultations were always circulated or reported to stakeholders, either for review and verification or informing how feedbacks had been considered where appropriate and feasible.

The stakeholder consultation was carried out in four overlapping phases. In the first two phases of consultation, the need for a national policy on climate change was articulated and emphasised on most occasions. In Phase 3 and 4, the policy framework, including its key actions, was strongly supported and welcomed as a promising tool to mainstream climate change in national development. The key features of each phase of consultation are summarised in Table 1 and explained further in the sections that follow.

### **Figure 1: Study approach and expected outputs**



**Table 1: Summary of the stakeholder consultation process**

Phase	1	2	3	4
<b>Duration</b>	2005-2008	2007-2008	2008	2008
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identification of issues.</li> <li>▪ Compilation of ideas and recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicating the policy formulation process and preliminary outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Awareness raising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Soliciting of inputs on policy framework.</li> <li>▪ Seeking of guidance and endorsement by national committee and national focal point.</li> </ul>	Soliciting of inputs on draft policy.
<b>Approach of consultation</b>	Indirect (reviews of conference proceedings)	Direct (presentation of study approach and preliminary outcomes)	Direct (through workshop and official submission by agencies); Survey; Interview	Direct (workshop and official submission)
<b>Number of event</b>	11	7	7	1
<b>Types of event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project specific preparatory/inception and consultative meetings.</li> <li>▪ Capacity building initiatives.</li> <li>▪ Awareness raising, and sharing of information and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project specific initiation and consultative meetings.</li> <li>▪ Awareness raising, and sharing of information and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer review and consultation.</li> <li>▪ Policy and senior level briefing and consultation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>Level of stakeholders</b>	National and state	National and state.	National.	National and state.
<b>Number of</b>	~ 1150	~ 400	~ 130	~ 100

stakeholders				
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### *Phase 1*

Phase 1 focused on documenting viewpoints obtained from eleven meetings over a period of four years, from 2005 to 2008. The meetings involved about 1150 participants. The main objectives of this phase are to identify key issues of concern and compile ideas and recommendations expressed by stakeholders in different meetings. Many of these meetings were carried out prior to the initiation or during the initial stage of the study. Most of the meeting reports and conference proceedings from these events were published by LESTARI or prepared with assistance from LESTARI's researchers.

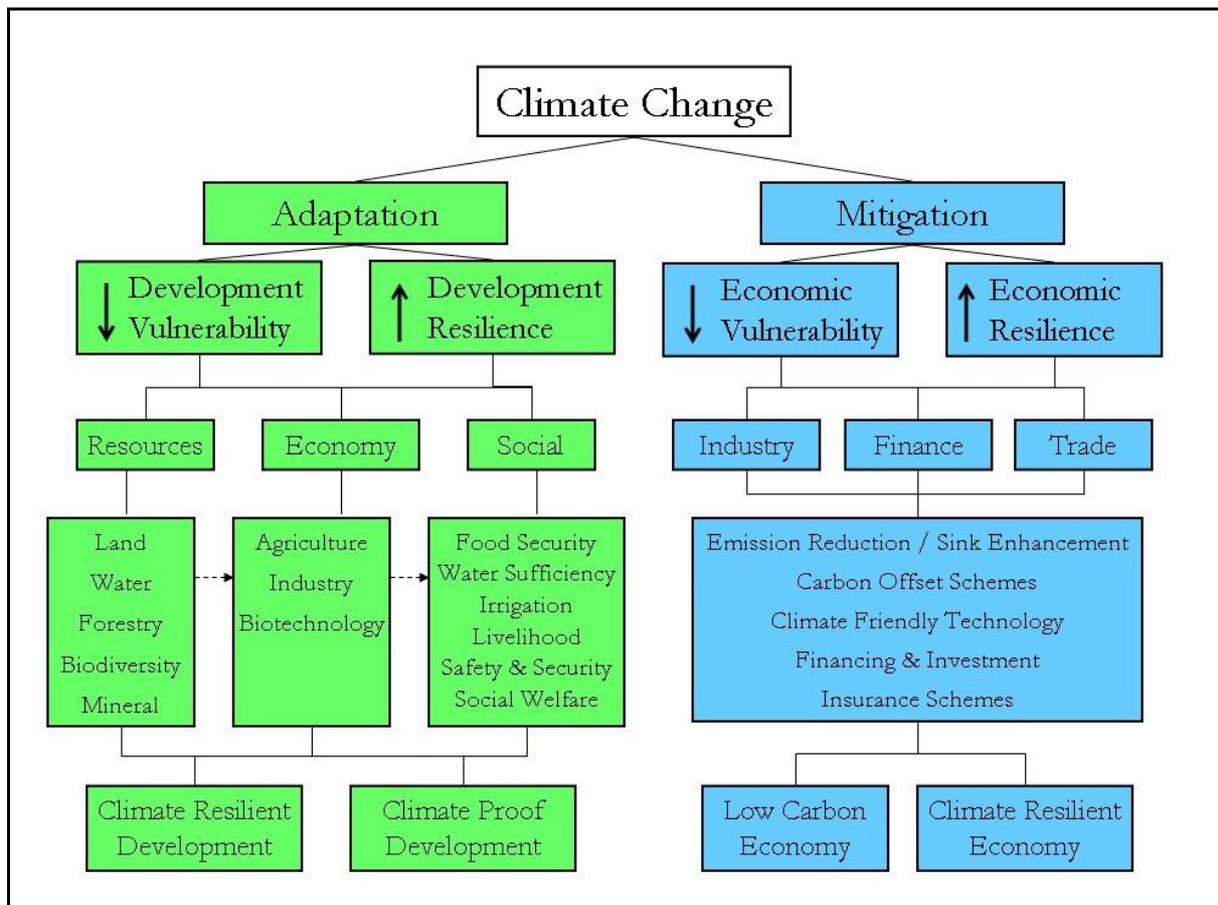
The country's obligations to the UNFCCC, national reporting in particular, were repeatedly acknowledged and considered as useful process to capitalise on for identifying and satisfying the country's own concern of interest, building capacity as well formulating future climate change policy (Tan, 2005a; Tan, 2005b; PTM, 2007). Nevertheless, as climate change is rather a new issue in the country, the shortcomings in the existing institutional arrangement and policies were recognised (Anon, 2007c; Azlina et al., 2007; Raja Zaharaton et al., 2008). There are many proposals for ensuring proper mechanism for implementation of international conventions and national policies, and capacity development for the whole spectrum of government structure from national to state and local levels (Anon, 2007c; Azlina et al., 2007; Azrina, 2007; Pereira and Subramaniam, 2007; PTM, 2007; Raja Zaharaton et al., 2008). The need to formulate climate change policy to harmonise and provide guidance to existing policies (Pereira and Subramaniam, 2007), to mainstream climate change into national policies, programme and plans (Pereira and Subramaniam, 2007; Tan et al., 2007; Azrina, 2007; Raja Zaharaton et al., 2008). Most of these meetings also pointed out the gaps and constraints (non-accessibility of data, lack of capacity building, technology needs, financing mechanisms, and others) and provided recommendations on general aspects (awareness raising, clarify roles and responsibilities, coordination and cooperation, among others) and sector-specific actions (energy, transport, water, agriculture, forestry and others).

The initiative in developing a national policy on climate change was informed to the stakeholders in some occasions, but consultations were undertaken indirectly in this phase. The inputs gathered served as the basis for developing the policy framework. Figure 2 shows the overall framework for the proposed National Policy on Climate Change, which seeks to balance adaptation and mitigation.

### *Phase 2*

Phase 2 focused on keeping the stakeholders informed on the policy formulation. There were seven meetings involving about 400 participants held in 2007 and 2008. Some events were project-specific initiation and consultative meetings, while others mainly aimed to raise awareness and provide a platform for sharing of information and experience. Researchers involved in the study presented to the stakeholders about the approach undertaken in formulating the policy and some preliminary results obtained to-date. Proceedings of the meetings are either not prepared or unavailable. Based on the interactions and responses, stakeholders indicated their support to a national policy on climate change. Inputs gathered from these meetings served to consolidate the policy framework.

**Figure 2: Overall framework of a national climate change policy**



### Phase 3

Phase 3 involved presentation of the proposed policy framework to obtain direct feedback from about 130 stakeholders in seven consultative meetings. The stakeholders were approached through peer review sessions, direct interviews and surveys. Based on the feedback, key actions were formulated and improved. Results of these consultative meetings were then presented at policy and high level briefing sessions in seeking for policy guidance and endorsement, while also soliciting inputs.

When this phase of consultation was initiated, the government had just established the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change in early 2008 with the aim to coordinate cooperation from all relevant ministries, state governments and local authorities in the planning and implementation of climate change responses. One of the main issues of consultation was deliberating the structure, compositions and functions of several sub-committees to be established to support the cabinet committee. This is a crucial aspect to the policy formulation as the drafted policy is expected to be implemented through the institutional arrangement that is created ultimately.

As Malaysia continues its development and economic growth, it will be expected to share greater commitment in global mitigation actions. Stakeholders viewed that a national policy should prepare the country in progressing towards that direction. The private and industrial sector, which is the main implementer to most of such mitigation efforts, needs to be engaged continuously to ensure awareness is raised, capacity is built and ownership is fostered. A survey on “The Issues on Climate Change, Business and Sustainability” was conducted to assess the level of awareness on climate change in the corporate sector of Malaysia. Data was collected from senior management officers of companies that are members of two main industrial associations. The preliminary results of the survey reveal that all the respondents (100%) are aware of climate change issues (e.g. global warming, sea level rising, floods, tsunamis, drought and so on). About 70% of the respondents perceived that climate change will affect the company’s profits. Of this group, 96% of the respondents viewed climate change as an

environmental, 91% viewed it as a development issue whilst 87% related to it as a business issue. On the responsibility to address climate change, a majority of the respondents were of the view that it should be taken by the government (89%) and the corporate sector (74%). In terms of addressing climate change issues within their companies, a majority of the respondents stated that important factors to motivate them are education and awareness building; legislation and regulation; and appropriate technology.

Several consultation workshops were organised to directly gather viewpoints and inputs of various major stakeholder groups on the policy framework on climate change (UKM-LESTARI, 2008a). The stakeholders consulted, including government agencies, private sector, research institutions, non-governmental organisations and academia, supported the development of a dedicated national policy on climate change. They also agreed that a complete policy formulation would encompass principles, strategic thrusts and key actions. The need for strengthening existing institutional arrangement was stressed and the effectiveness of programmes must be ensured through the use of indicators or appropriate mechanism. As the climate change will cause localised impacts, local level participation is highlighted.

#### ***Phase 4***

Phase 4 of the consultation involved scrutiny of the draft policy and key actions by about 100 stakeholders, including the state governments of Sabah and Sarawak. A consultation workshop was held in September 2008 to solicit stakeholders' viewpoints and inputs on the Draft National Policy on Climate Change. The Sabah State Economic Planning Unit had also consulted agencies in Sabah and submitted their comments and inputs to the ministry. These inputs have been taken into account in refining National Policy on Climate Change.

The stakeholders agreed that the national policy on climate change should steer for mainstreaming of climate change measures, integration of balanced adaptation and mitigation responses, and strengthening of institutional and implementation capacity (UKM-LESTARI, 2008b). Prioritisation is needed on enhancing the country's adaptive capacity to actual or expected impacts of climate change. Nationally appropriate mitigation actions should be approached to enhance adaptation and sustainable development. Stakeholders also agreed that concerted holistic responses is necessary as climate change impacts transcend all levels, sectors, stakeholders and major groups, whilst effective collaborative participation, grounded on indigenous and scientific knowledge should serve as a mainstay for institutional capacity building. The policy will facilitate the integration of climate change considerations in development and decision-making processes, to foster sustainable economic and human development as well as environmental conservation. It should also complement existing policies and takes cognisance of international conventions on global concerns.

The Draft National Policy on Climate Change, consists of several key elements that include objectives, principles, strategic thrusts and key actions, and is aimed at ensuring a climate-resilient development and low carbon economy that fulfils national aspirations for sustainability (Pereira, 2008). Table 1 summarises briefly the objectives, principles and strategic thrusts of the draft policy.

#### **Next Steps**

Further to several rounds of consultations with stakeholders, viewpoints gathered are being reconciled and consolidated. While the policy formulation is entering its final stage, details on its implementation are also being deliberated. Whilst the strategic thrusts and their key actions have been derived bearing in mind the new framework of Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and the existing government structure, particular attention will be given on determining key implementers and other partner agencies as identified through the stakeholder consultations. Timeline for actions, in terms of short, medium and long terms, will be suggested, along with appropriate performance indicators that can be assigned to each action in order to facilitate measurement, reporting, verification and reviewing during

the execution stage. Once all these few aspects are completed, the draft final policy will be presented to the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change for consideration with a view for adoption.

**Table 1: The Draft National Policy on Climate Change – Objectives, principles and strategic thrusts (Source: Pereira, 2008)**

<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mainstreaming of measures to address climate change challenges through strengthened economic competitiveness, wise management of resources, environmental conservation and enhanced quality of life for sustainable development.</li> <li>▪ Integration of responses into national policies, plans and programmes to strengthen the resilience of development from arising impacts of climate change.</li> <li>▪ Strengthening of institutional and implementation capacity to better harness opportunities in reducing negative impacts of climate change.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principles/Strategic Thrusts</b></p> <p>Principle 1. Development on a Sustainable Path: Integrate climate change responses in national development plans to fulfil the country’s aspiration for sustainable development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 1. Facilitate the harmonisation of existing policies to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in a balanced manner.</li> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 2. Institute measures to make development climate-resilient through low carbon economy to enhance global competitiveness and attain environmentally sustainable socio-economic growth.</li> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 3. Support climate-resilient industrial development and investment in pursuit of sustainable socio-economic growth.</li> </ul> <p>Principle 2. Sustainability of Environment and Natural Resources: Initiate actions on climate change issues that contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources while enhancing energy efficiency and sufficiency as well as water and food security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 1. Adopt balanced adaptation and mitigation measures to climate-proof development, strengthen environmental conservation and promote sustainability of natural resources</li> </ul> <p>Principle 3. Integrated Planning and Implementation: Integrate planning and implementation to climate-proof development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 1. Institute measures to integrate cross-cutting issues in policies, plans, programmes and projects in order to increase resilience to and minimise negative impacts of climate change.</li> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 2. Support knowledge-based decision making through intensive climate related research and development and capacity building of human resources.</li> </ul> <p>Principle 4. Effective Participation: Improve participation of stakeholders and major groups for effective implementation of climate change responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 1. Improve collaboration through efficient communication and coordination among all stakeholders for effective implementation of climate change responses.</li> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 2. Increase awareness and public participation to promote behavioural responses to climate change.</li> </ul> <p>Principle 5. Common but Differentiated Responsibility: International involvement on climate change will be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Thrust 1. Strengthen involvement in international activities on climate change based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.</li> </ul>

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