

**SPEECH OF KL COP TOWN HALL :
TRANSLATING CLIMATE POLICY INTO LOCAL ACTION**

**SPATIAL PLANNING AS THE BACKBONE OF URBAN
RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

DATUK TPr DR. ALIAS BIN RAMELI
Director General of Town and Country Planning
(PLANMalaysia)

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Assalamualaikum w.b.t. and a very good morning.

1. It is truly an honour to be part of this important **Kuala Lumpur COP Town Hall**, centred on a theme that resonates deeply with our national agenda “**TRANSLATING CLIMATE POLICY INTO LOCAL ACTION**”.
2. As we gather here in the vibrant heart of Kuala Lumpur, we are reminded that cities are both the drivers of economic growth and the frontlines of climate risk. Like many ASEAN countries, Malaysia stands at a critical juncture where the pace of urbanisation must now be matched by the urgency of climate action. So today, we are **called to act, not in theory, not on policy papers, but on the ground, on real local action.**

MALAYSIA URBANISATION AND CLIMATE SCENARIO

3. Malaysia today is becoming increasingly urbanised. In 2024, more than 75.8% of our 34.1 million people recorded living in urban areas. This rapid urbanisation certainly demands careful and effective urban planning and governance.
4. The rising frequency and intensity of natural disasters, particularly floods, coastal erosion, and landslides occurring nationwide, demonstrate that Malaysia is increasingly vulnerable to **climate-related hazards**, firmly placing the country in the “**natural disaster-prone**” category. In urban areas, climate risks are intensified by the alarming fact that **70% of greenhouse gas emissions** contributed from urban activities, **despite built-up areas in Peninsular**

Malaysia accounting for only 9.57% of the land (I-PLAN Data, 2024).

5. These situations show that Malaysia is confronting a **critical climate emergency** - one that demands comprehensive and integrated cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement. **Spatial planning is the main solution in shaping ‘the future we want’** for our cities and rural communities.

NEGLECTED ROLE OF URBAN PLANNING IN CLIMATE ACTION

6. While urban planning’s role in addressing climate change impacts **was generally overlooked and neglected** by authorities and parties that are given responsibility to lead the agenda of climate solution, we, urban planners and managers across Malaysia’s 156 local governments, **remain steadfast in our mission**. For the nation’s future, **we continue and will continue to develop strategies to protect our environment and mitigate climate impacts through comprehensive planning and development management**.
7. Regrettably, in the past we placed **too much faith in scientists** and so-called climate-friendly technologies as the sole solutions to climate change. **I personally struggled against the prevailing mindset that recognized only climate adaptation as the fundamental strategy to address our nation's climate challenges**.

8. As a town planner, I firmly believe that both **CLIMATE ADAPTATION** and **CLIMATE MITIGATION**, when integrated with the **BUILD BACK BETTER** approach in development planning, constitute equally vital strategies to confront climate change, global warming, and other current and emerging environmental challenges.
9. Acknowledging this fundamental principle, Malaysia's urban planning framework, both in the past two decades and currently, has been actively evolving to address the realities, consequences, and potential impacts of climate change, whether in crisis situations or emergency scenarios.
10. Today, urban governance and planning **have no choice but to prioritize resilience and sustainability** by adopting innovative approaches beyond conventional methods. This requires data-driven decision-making, comprehensive analytics, scenario planning, and technology-based solutions.

13TH MALAYSIA PLAN: TO PROTECT OUR MOTHER EARTH

11. In response to the challenges and commitments, the newly announced **13th Malaysia Plan (RMKe-13)** has marked a bold step forward in **Redesigning National Development** between 2026 and 2030. As our Prime Minister rightly stated that **protecting the health of our mother earth and addressing the impacts of climate change and disaster risks is a shared responsible**. We can no longer treat economic planning and environmental responsibility as separate agendas. We must move forward together.

12. Under the 13th Malaysia Plan, we are called for mainstreaming **disaster risk management and urban resilience** into spatial planning. Urban planning is now more than spatial development planning, it is about enabling **climate action, community preparedness and long-term sustainability**.

MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE INITIATIVES INTO SPATIAL PLANNING AND LOCAL ACTIONS

13. **The Malaysia Smart City Framework (MSCF)**, supported by the **National Climate Change Policy 2.0, National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2030, National Low Carbon Cities Masterplan, and the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR)**, is establishing a robust foundation for sustainable urban development. These integrated efforts ensure that urban planning advances sustainable and climate-resilient cities, protecting our 'Rakyat', preserving our environment, and securing our shared future."
14. Building on this momentum, PLANMalaysia has proactively integrated **climate actions** across all tiers of Malaysia's statutory spatial planning framework, from the **National Physical Plan** down to **State Structure Plans, Local Plans, and Special Area Plans**. These now incorporate mandatory climate-responsive overlays, steering development away from hazard-prone zones. Innovative urban solutions, such as sponge cities, permeable surfaces, and flood buffer corridors, are being institutionalized as the new standard for resilient design. **Integrating climate resilience into our cities is no longer an option; it is the cornerstone of sustainable development and a safeguard for future generations.**

15. PLANMalaysia has already implemented pioneering ***Special Action Plans*** in both urban and rural areas. For example, in Terengganu, the *Special Action Plans for Kampung Tanjung and Kampung Pantai Batu Rakit* were developed to combat severe coastal erosion, safeguarding homes, livelihoods, and the future of these vulnerable communities.
16. To further strengthen climate resilience, we have embedded the **Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)** approach into our Local Plans and Special Area Plans. This shift necessitates a granular, **people-first strategy**, referred to as ***Micro Planning*** - which tailor interventions to the unique risks, realities, and aspirations of neighbourhoods, villages, and local communities.
17. At a broader scale, to comprehensively safeguard Malaysia's coastlines, we have launched the **2nd National Coastal Zone Physical Plan (RPP-2)** - a proactive framework that strengthens resilience through strategic coastal management guidance for state-level implementation. Complementing this effort, we've pioneered the **National Coastal Vulnerability Index (NCVI)**, an innovative planning tool designed to protect vulnerable communities and preserve fragile coastal ecosystems through data-driven decision making.
18. Complementing these efforts, PLANMalaysia has developed a comprehensive suite of planning guidelines, including Guidelines for:
 - Disaster Resilient Cities;

- Low Carbon Cities;
- Green Neighbourhood;
- Solar Farm Development; and
- Electric Vehicle Charging Bay (EVCB).

19. These guidelines form the essential framework empowering urban planners and city managers to systematically integrate disaster resilience and low carbon initiatives into development plans.

LEVERAGING URBAN PLANNING DIGITALISATION INITIATIVE

20. To effectively translate climate policy into local implementation, Malaysia is institutionalizing evidence-based planning through data-driven governance.

21. The **Malaysia Urban Observatory (MUO)** is established as a centralized digital hub to monitor, analyse, and guide evidence-based urban development in alignment with national policies and global sustainability agendas.

22. To support this, our MURNInets system (Malaysia Urban Rural National Indicators Network for Sustainable Development) has systematically tracked over 40 SDG-aligned indicators, enabling local authorities to quantify progress, pinpoint implementation gaps and drive targeted interventions aligning with both SDG 2030 and the New Urban Agenda.

23. The **Malaysia Smart City Recognition Programme** further catalyses this transition by rigorously assessing local authorities on two transformative dimensions, which are **Technology Adoption**,

and Climate Governance. This dual focus ensures Malaysian cities don't just become smarter, but **resilient-first**, where infrastructure digitization and climate actions advance in lockstep.

24. Collectively, these digital governance platforms form the backbone of Malaysia's Smart City Agenda under the Malaysia Smart City Framework (MSCF), accelerating our trajectory toward a Smart Nation by 2040.

CONCLUSION: SPATIAL PLANNING FOR SURVIVAL, EQUITY AND LEGACY

25. Malaysia's urban transformation transcends bricks and mortar, it is about **engineering communities that are resilient by design, inclusive by choice, and sustainable by necessity**, in harmony with our Malaysia MADANI vision. **SPATIAL PLANNING IS NO LONGER A PASSIVE TOOL, IT IS OUR MOST POWERFUL INSTRUMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE.**

26. This is the new covenant of Malaysian urbanism: **WHERE SPATIAL PLANS DON'T JUST GUIDE GROWTH - THEY GUARANTEE SURVIVAL, EQUITY, AND LEGACY.** The future isn't just something we build—it's **something we plan, with intention, today.**

Thank You.