



**Environmental Governance
in Malaysia:**
Insights and Reflections

Law Hieng Ding

To our beloved Prime Minister
Malaysia

Y. A. B. Dat' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad,

~~_____~~

Law Heng Ding
07 Oct. 2003.

Putra Jaya

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Environmental Governance in Malaysia:
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Law Hieng Ding
Includes references to speeches

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This Book is Dedicated To

Our beloved Prime Minister YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, for the trust, confidence, leadership, encouragement and support given to me during my tenure with the Government ;

My wife Soon Leng and children Eric, Sabrina, Michael and their spouses for their encouragement, moral support, understanding and love.



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FOREWORD

Environmental degradation and sustainable development are major issues of the day and a book on environmental governance in Malaysia covering almost three decades between 1974 and 2003 is indeed timely and most welcome.

I am of the view that YB Dato' Seri Law Hieng Ding, after having served the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (MOSTE) since 1974 from Parliamentary Secretary, Deputy Minister to his present portfolio as Minister, is the most appropriate person to write a book on environmental governance.

The portfolio for environmental governance is full of challenges involving numerous stakeholders from the business community, non-government organizations and is literally concerned with people from all walks of life. YB Dato' Seri Law has been fully aware of this heavy responsibility entrusted upon him as reflected by his persistency in advocating and presenting to the Cabinet important environmental legislations, regulations and policies that we have today.

I commend and congratulate YB Dato' Seri Law for authoring this informative book on his insights and reflections on environmental governance in Malaysia, which all should read and take heed for the benefit of present as well as future generations.



DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
Prime Minister of Malaysia
3rd September 2003

PREFACE

During my public service as Parliamentary Secretary, Deputy Minister and Minister in charge of the environment, I have witnessed the emergence of many environmental issues that affect various aspects of our lives and our nation. The topic of my book on environmental governance comes to mind as an appropriate subject for some analytical insights and reflections during my tenure in the environmental scene.

The scope of environmental governance is wide. It is about how societies deal with the environment, how environmental problems are identified and defined, and how environmental issues reach the political agenda where policies are finally formulated and programmes implemented. I have tried to select from my numerous speeches, to synthesize the groundwork that goes into the making of what constitutes environmental governance in the country. Unfortunately, not all the speeches could be included, as indeed there are just too many and inevitably, I could only choose some major ones to reflect on various aspects of environmental governance. However, I do hope that this will give a synoptic view of our environmental governance in the country.

This book is a compromise between my original aspirations and the realities of publication. In opting to concentrate on environmental governance, my other portfolios, science and technology, are played down and excluded although they are no less important. They will be subject to another publication.

Wherever possible, I have included excerpts of speeches that I have given at regional and international conferences, seminars and fora to reflect Malaysia's stand on major international environmental issues that affect us. Some of the speeches are in our national language, *Bahasa Malaysia*, and I do hope that international readers may forgive me for not giving a translation in the book.

As the book is on my insights and reflections, I have abstracted excerpts from the speeches so as not to bore the readers. The readers will find that during my early years in the Ministry, many of my speeches were lost when the Ministry was transferred from place to place. Thus, most of the speeches were from 1990 onwards.

I have divided the book into five parts, each reflecting special themes on environmental governance.

Part I provides a global perspective of environmental governance and my own induction into the subject which I relate closer home to the Asian and Malaysian scenarios.

Part II provides some landmark events at the national and international levels where Malaysia has been signatory to a number of agreements, conventions and protocols related to green and brown issues for environmental improvement such as sustainable development, climate change, energy conservation, ozone depleting substances, re-afforestation, land and water resources.

Part III delves into domestic environmental issues and challenges that our country faces, notably sustainable development, water pollution, oil spills, air pollution, haze and forest fires, soil erosion and management of hazardous and toxic wastes. Major policy decisions and implementation actions taken to address these issues are reflective of the diverse types of work being carried out in my Ministry.

Part IV deals with the soft side of environmental governance, specifically, on programmes, activities, campaigns, promotions, sponsorships and patronage for the purpose of educating and creating awareness among all levels of civil society and stakeholders regarding the environment. I personally feel that the softer strategies of environmental governance will in the long term reap the most rewarding and enduring returns.

Part V concludes with a mention of my other duties beyond the environment but, nevertheless, are inevitably intertwined, consciously or unconsciously, and equally important. As a Federal Minister from the State of Sarawak, and serving in the Federal Capital, there are duties to perform at a personal and political level that go beyond the environment.

I hope some of the insights and reflections that I have presented in the book will give a good picture of the status of the environmental governance in Malaysia.



DATO' SERI LAW HIENG DING

Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment

18th August 2003

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The invaluable advice from the Editorial Committee and Dr. Low Kwai Sim, a former Professor from the Department of Geography, University of Malaya, towards the publication of this book is gratefully acknowledged.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ACPMS	ASEAN Cooperative Programme on Marine Science
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFTA	Asian Free Trade Area
AMMH	ASEAN Environmental Ministers Meeting on Haze
APDC	Asian Pacific Development Corporation
API	Air Pollution Index
APIEA	Asia Pacific Institute for Environmental Assessment
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEM	ASEAN Environmental Ministers
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment
AWB	Asian Wetlands Bureau
BEA	Better Environment Award
BSCDM	Business Council for Sustainable Development Malaysia
CAQM	Continuous Air Quality Monitoring
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCICED	China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CETDEM	Centre for Environmental Development and Technology Malaysia
CETEC	Centre for Environmental Technologies
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbon
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
COP6	Sixth Conference of Parties
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
DANCED	Danish Co-operation for Environment and Development
DEIA	Detailed Environmental Impact Assessment
DOE	Department of Environment
DOSH	Department of Occupational Safety and Health
ECOASIA	Environmental Congress for Asia and Pacific
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENSEARCH	Environmental Management and Research Association Malaysia
EPSM	Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia
EQA	Environmental Quality Act
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMM	Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers
FOE	Friends of the Earth
FOMCA	Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GMAC	Genetic Modification Advisory Committee
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbon
HFC	Hydrofluorocarbon
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
IPGRI	International Plant Genetic Research Institute
IRPTC	International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals
LRT	Light Rail Transit
ISIS	Institute of Strategic and International Studies
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MACRES	Malaysian Centre for Remote Sensing
MASM	Minggu Alam Sekitar Malaysia
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MEW	Malaysian Environmental Week
MEXCOE	Ministers and Executive Councillors Responsible for Environmental Matters
MFEJ	Malaysian Forum of Environmental Journalists
MICCI	Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry

MINDS	Malaysian Invention and Design Society
MNS	Malaysian Nature Society
MOSTE	Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment
MPPJ	Majlis Perbandaran Petaling Jaya
MRCS	Malaysian Red Crescent Society
NCE	National Committee on Environment
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
NSC	National Steering Committee
ODS	Ozone Depleting Substances
OPP3	Third Outline Perspective Plan
OPRC	Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation
PMC	Project Management Office
R&D	Research and Development
RAN	Rainforest Action Network
RHAP	Regional Haze Action Plan
SMI	Small and Medium-scale Industries
TWNSO	Third World Network of Scientific Organizations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
WESTPAC	Western Pacific
WHO	World Health Organization
WISE	Women Inventors', Scientists and Engineers
WMO	World Meteorological Office
WWF	World Wildlife Fund/World Wide Fund
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
YAB	Yang Amat Berhormat
YB	Yang Berhormat

PART I

Environmental Governance

