



Country Report 2003

# Malaysia

## COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS FOR HIGHLANDS CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Highlands are environmentally sensitive areas. The fragmented administrative and management of highlands resources pose difficulties for holistic and integrated decision making. Given that many highlands in Malaysia straddle over two or more states, managing them as single entities would lead towards holistic solutions. Many districts have common boundaries in the highlands, making it necessary to plan and manage highlands as integral and physical planning units. As such, the strategy and recommendations presented in the Country Report are to improve inter-agency and inter-stakeholder collaboration on environmental management, development planning and biodiversity conservation of the highlands, so as to ensure sustainable economic development.

### THE RECOMMENDATION OF BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

#### **Local Residents should be educated on environmental conservation.**

Local Residents need to be educated on environmental conservation and the importance of sustainable development in the highlands. The Local residents as key stakeholders should be encouraged to gain further knowledge and detailed understanding of environmental issues. This process would help lead to a change of perception and attitudes towards environmental conservation and sustainable development in the highlands. Local residents should also be expected to acquire skills in identifying, preventing and resolving environmental problems. The extend of civic consciousness should be greatly enhanced in the highlands.

#### **Government decision-makers, officers and administrators should be educated on environmental conservation.**

Government decision makers, officers and administrators should be educated on environmental conservation and management in order to integrate environment concerns into the decision making and policy making process. Environmental education would include awareness rising on highlands issues. The Local Authorities are a prime candidate for environmental education, since they are frontline agencies involved in day-to-day operations. Administrative training programmes should include environmental education modules to raise awareness.

#### **Environmental awareness and capacity among all stakeholders shall be increased.**

Environmental education should be promoted and intensified to enable and encourage all stakeholders to participate in the sustainable development of the highlands. The first step in environmental education is raising awareness. Then stakeholders would be encouraged to gain further knowledge and understanding of environmental issues and of each stakeholder's role in overcoming the problems. This would lead to a change of perception and attitudes towards environmental conservation and sustainable development, which should then motivate people to actively participate in and continue towards sustainable development. Individuals and communities should also acquire skills for identifying, preventing and solving environmental problems.

## **The emphasis on environmental education in the schools in the highlands should be increased.**

The Ministry of Education should increase the emphasis on environmental education in the schools in the highlands in order to raise environmental awareness and educate students on the importance of environmental conservation right from a young age. The Ministry of Education should continue its partnership work with non-governmental organisations to incorporate environmental education module into the formal education curriculum. Nature education centres in the highlands should be utilized to expose students to environmental issues unique to the highlands. Teachers and trainers will also need to be trained to teach the environmental subjects and use the teaching aids developed for the purpose. Some NGOs are presently involved in conducting environment education modules for students and in training teachers to include environmental awareness elements in the school curriculum.

## **A systematic slope maintenance programme should be undertaken with emphasis on early detection and prevention of slope instability problems.**

Based on the regular inspection and monitoring slopes, government agencies and private property owners and occupants should formulate and implement slope maintenance programmes to carry out preventive maintenance of slopes. This is especially important for slopes which pose risk to the public, such as slopes along main roads and slopes adjacent to densely populated areas. It is recommended that the Local Authorities, and Public Works Department (PWD) undertake a systematic slope maintenance programmes that include:

- i. establishment of a database of slopes characteristics.
- ii. identification and mapping of critical slopes.
- iii. regular inspection of all slopes.
- iv. establishment of a physical monitoring programme of all critical slopes.
- v. a system to disseminate information on slopes to relevant stakeholders including the local community.

## **Occupants and property owners should be educated on ways to monitor slopes within their property.**

The Local Authorities should educate occupants and property owners on the importance of regularly monitoring slopes within their properties. Example may be drawn from Hong Kong, where Civil Engineering Department of the Local Government provides information to the public on ways to inspect slopes and walls within private property. Property owners should be given guides on early detection of potential slope problems and how to recognise the warning signs of potential slope failure. The public will then be able to assist the authorities in monitoring slopes on a wider scale. The public can be further motivated for being informed on the catastrophe that could befall them should any major slope failure occurs. The Public Works Department could assist by providing technical advice to the Local Authorities.

## **An annual essay competition focusing on the highlands should be organised.**

It is recommended that a nationwide essay competition focusing on "Sustainable Development in the Malaysian Highlands" be organised by The Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment. The aim of such an essay competition, which should be divided into appropriate categories, would be for further knowledge, awareness and interest among the Malaysian public, including school children, in sustainable development.

## **The role and function of the Nature Education Centres in the Highlands should be enhanced.**

The education centres run by the government departments and NGOs should be made to function as a place of information dissemination and environment awareness for the local community, with an emphasis on targeting students and farmers who reside in the highlands. In addition, the education centre should be promoted as a stopover for local and foreign tourists. Exhibits on the ecology and natural attractions of the highlands should be set up and open for public viewing. The education centre should be a place for visitors to learn about environmental issues through various exhibition units, literature, audio-visual, posters and displays. Nature trail guides and brochures should also be made available to tourists as reference materials and souvenirs.

## **The participation of the aborigines (Orang Asli) in all phases of economic development must be encouraged.**

The aborigines should be given sufficient opportunities to be involved in future development, especially those close to their settlement. The opportunities could be in the form of employment opportunities, local product development, entrepreneurship and management of their cultural heritage. The Departments concerned should ensure that there will be efforts to establish, where appropriate, arrangements to strengthen the participation of the Orang Asli as stakeholders in the formulation of national policies and programmes relating to resource management.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is at present, no overarching policy or strategy with regard to the land use in highland areas, often resulting in haphazard and ecologically insensitive development. Therefore, strategies for the optimal sustainable utilization of the highlands and the resources are essential to guide the development plans for the Main Range as well as the highlands in the rest of the country. In this context, the current situation in Malaysia with regard to highland conservation, has presented the critical need for a holistic and integrated approach to disaster reduction, mitigation and preparedness, which focuses on collaboration among all stakeholders. This would enable a much better basis for the conservation and management of the highlands environment for sustainable development.

**» Page Top**

**» Country Report Top**



Country Report 2003

# Malaysia

## THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE AND FUTURE DIRECTION ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Although Malaysia is geographically located outside the "Pacific Rim of Fire" and is relatively free from any severe ravages destruction caused by natural disasters such as earthquake, typhoons and volcanic eruptions, nevertheless the country has experienced other types of natural disasters such as to monsoon floods, landslides and severe haze. Malaysia also went through several extreme climatic events, ranging from freaky thunderstorms to monsoonal floods in 2003. Heavy rain caused major flooding in Kuala Lumpur City several time during the year. The states of Kedah, Penang and Northern Perak were severely hit by worst floods in October 2003. About 22,000 hectares of agricultural lands were submerged, which affected about 13,000 farmers. Loses amounted to about Ringgit Malaysia 17 millions (USD 4.4 millions). Haze caused by open burning of Tran boundary transport of smoke occurred during the dryer period. The country also from time to time, experiences some man-made disasters, which cause considerable damage to properties and loss of lives.

The Government is very concerned about occurrences of such disasters that adversely affect its people. Emphasis is being given to disaster risks reduction and development of disaster management capabilities in the various areas of disaster prevention, mitigation, response and recovery.

### THE AIM

The aim of this Country Paper is to outline and highlight briefly to the 6th ADRC International Meeting & the 3rd ISDR Asian Meeting on the machinery and mechanism of the current Malaysia's Disaster Management. In addition, the Country Paper also highlights some strategies for future direction in enhancing disaster management in the country.

### THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION (NSD)

The National Security Division (NSD) is responsible for coordinating activities related to the preparation, prevention, response and handling of disasters, basically related to natural and technological disasters.

### MECHANISM AND MACHINERY IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The National Security Council (NSC) Directive No. 20 on "Policy and Mechanism on National Disaster and Relief Management" was issued on 11th May 1997. The aim of the NSC Directive No. 20, (which is an Executive Order from the Honorable Prime Minister), is to outline the policy on Disaster and Relief Management according to the level and complexity of disaster, and to establish the management mechanism with the purpose of determining the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in handling the disaster.

The handling and resolving of disasters in Malaysia are currently conducted through the Committee System which emphasizes on the concept of coordination and mobilizations of agencies involved in an integrated and coordinated manner. In this respect, the management and handling of disaster are undertaken by the Disaster Management and Relief Committee at the Federal, State and District Level respectively. The Committee as stipulated in the NSC Directive No. 20 ensures that the threat to public safety as well as protection of properties are effectively managed and handled.

The Government hopes that with the devisal of disaster management mechanism as reflected in NSC Directive No. 20, the handling and resolving of disaster could be carried out in a more coordinated manner with the integrated involvement and mobilization of related agencies. All these will in turn ensure that Malaysia has credible disaster management machinery which is able to reduce the suffering and loses of the people in the face of ruthless disasters.

## **REGIONAL COOPERATION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Regional and sub-regional cooperation in the field of disaster management and preparedness is recognized as very important in the effort to reduce disaster risk and to implement effective mitigation, response and recovery measures. In this respect, Malaysia gives support to the various regional forums such as the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Regional Haze Task Force as well as the Sub-Regional Fire Fighting Arrangement. Malaysia believes that regional mechanism is needed to promote exchange of information and sharing of experiences among personnel involved in disaster management in the region. Such regional cooperation is expected to contribute greatly to disaster reduction efforts and enhance national disaster management capabilities in the areas of resource mobilization, communication networks, warning systems, forecasting techniques and training.

## **PROGRAMMES FOR FUTURE DIRECTION**

In order to enhance Malaysia's capability in the future course and direction of our disaster management, the country has adopted the following strategies:

1. To integrate mitigation planning into the overall national development plans and projects for sustainable development.
2. To develop risk assessment capabilities, in order to reduce disaster vulnerability which can be translated into mitigation policies and measures.
3. To form Working Committees involving Lead Agencies in risk analysis and assessment for specific sectors of disaster prevention.
4. To develop an integrated database management system for disaster planning and prevention.
5. To strengthen the existing laws and regulations on the aspect of safety, licensing and enforcement for the protection of public safety, properties and the environment in disaster preparedness and prevention.
6. To conduct regular educational and community awareness programs in disaster prevention measures, particularly for risk mitigation strategies.
7. To involve the District and State Disaster Management Committees and authorities in the development, testing and implementation of the overall emergency response plans, especially on the Industrial Disaster Management System of the respective industries.
8. To introduce standard safety control at the installations in order to have zero-threat during the occurrence of any industrial incident, which could affect the nearby population?
9. To promote and develop regional cooperation and networking for exchanging, sharing and training on disaster management, as well as cooperation in rendering and receiving of disaster assistance, be it in the form of humanitarian assistance of the dispatch of search and rescue teams.

## **CONCLUSION**

Due to the rapid development in the country, the cost of damage due to disaster is also escalating. Malaysia realized the importance that the element of safety must be built into each development project to avoid high casualty and damage to life and property in the event of a disaster. An integrated approach in the various aspects of disaster management involving the various agencies is adopted to achieve higher efficiency and greater effectiveness. Efforts are being made by the Government to create higher awareness among the people so as to enhance disaster preparedness as well as to build a culture of prevention and Civil Protection/Public Safety in the community. The Government also hopes to enhance its national capabilities in disaster management by the setting up of training facilities and through related activities in cooperation with other countries. Malaysia hopes to create a safer environment for the people through effective management, risk reduction efforts and sustainable development in the 21st century.

» [Page Top](#)

» [Country Report Top](#)