



Malaysian Environmental NGOs

REPORT ON ANNUAL MENGO MEETING 2009

9 April 2009, WWF- Malaysia



Prepared by:

MENGO Support Unit

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Present:

1. Dr. Dionysius Sharma - Chairperson
2. Dr. Sundari Ramakrishna - MSU
3. Mr. Raymond Abin - BRIMAS
4. Mr. Anthony Tan -CETDEM
5. Mageswari Sangaralingam – CAP
6. Mrs. Thayanithi Kulenthiran – ENSEARCH
7. Ms. Geetha P. Kumaran – ENSEARCH & CETEC
8. Ms. Khaw Siok Kim– EPSM
9. Mr. Manogaran Maniam – EPSM
10. Dr. Kalithasan - GEC
11. Mr. Yeap Chin Aik - MNS
12. Mr. Adrian Lasimbang – PACOS
13. Ms. Adelaine Tan – MSU
14. Mr. Hong Chern Wern-WWP
15. Mr. Arjunaidi - MKS
16. Ms. Melissa Chia- WWF
17. Mr. Awang Muzaidin – MSU
18. Dr. Mohamed Yunus Yasin – MENGO web forum moderator
19. Ms. Karyn Mak- SENEDI
20. Ms. Fu Ching Yee – SENEDI

Absent:

1. MSMS
2. SERI
3. SAM
4. SUSDEN
5. TRAFFIC-SEA
6. TWN
7. WI

MENGO ANNUAL MEETING 2009
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1. Opening Remarks by Chairperson of MENGO

The Chair, Dato' Dr Dionysius welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted that 2009 will be a good year ahead but with challenges to meet. Most importantly the sustainability of the network, must be addressed adequately especially with DANIDA funding coming to an end. There has been some success to obtain funds for the coalition and pay for secretariat duties but still the regular core income to fund MENGO Support Unit (MSU) remains a challenge. At the completion of the Biodiversity project (i.e. 31 July 2010) MSU have to function with skeletal staff and resources. There is opportunity to work with government on policy issues and coordinate the voice and input from members. In some cases, members of the network can work together on a project level. MENGO needs to determine what will actually bind the coalition and re-look the strategic direction and way forward.

The Chair appealed to members to work cohesively in the coming months to ensure continuity of the coalition, yet to recognise the diversity of the grouping. Members do need to set aside time to work on issues of MENGO to ensure its survival and relevancy. As Chairperson of the coalition for the last 2 terms, Dato' Dionysius stated that he is prepared to step down and make way for others to serve in the MENGO Co-operating Committee (MCC). The role of the Chair is not difficult but primarily playing a key role in decision-making to provide guidance and direction for the network. He concluded by saying that he hoped the deliberations of the Annual General Meeting and its outcome would be beneficial.

2. Introduction to the meeting and its objectives

First and foremost, Dr. Sundari thanked WWF-Malaysia for providing the venue for the annual meeting of its members as this helps in saving some of the project funds. She informed the group that one of the objectives of the meeting is to report back to MENGO members on the work progress of the Civil Society Sub-component and also to discuss sustainability of the MENGO platform and brainstorm on the conference *SM 2009*. She explained the agenda items from the programme for the day (Annex 1). Dr Sundari stated that the last agenda item for that day would be the soft launch of the MENGO Green Hunt, where the print and broadcast media have been invited together with those organizations who have sponsored and contributed funds for the Green Hunt. She requested all those present at the AGM to stay on till 6pm to support the launch.

3. Election of members of MENGO Co-operating Committee

Dr. Sundari brought to attention the voting process of the MCC members. Member organizations that responded that there would be no representation at the AGM were: SERI, TrEES, MSMS, TRAFFIC, SUSDEN, and WI. A full list of attendees for the AGM is in Annex 2.

There were members present at the meeting who informed that their organization neither want to be nominated or elected into the committee and they were MNS and WWP respectively. The reasons given were due to workload in their current positions in the respective organizations.

There was some discussion on house rules, and elaboration about the representatives from Sabah, Sarawak and the outgoing Chair will be retained in the committee. Essentially the meeting decided that there would be an election of 4 new members for the 7 MCC as 3 of the representatives are automatically included. The ballots were then passed out and the voting was conducted in two stages: 1) for the committee members of MCC and 2) selection for the chairperson and vice-chairperson.

The new MCC members for 2009/2010 are as follows:

1. Dato' Dr Dionysius S (Chair) of WWF- Malaysia
2. Mageswari S (Vice-Chair) of CAP
3. Khaw Siok Khim (EPSM)
4. Representative from ENSEARCH (to be notified by Geetha Kumaran)
5. Adrian Lasimbang (PACOS)
6. Raymond Abin (BRIMAS)
7. Faizal Parish (GEC)

The elected Chairperson, Dr Dionysius expressed his concern about those members of the network who are not engaged enough to work together in the coalition. Some thought must be given to this aspect; seek effective participation of members in activities carried out by MENGO and through MSU for the continuity of the network.

4. Updates from MSU

4.1 General comments

Dr Sundari stated that the reporting period from MSU would be from the last MCC meeting of 16 December 2008 till 1 April 2009. The most important issue is timely response from members on organising the SM 2009 where collective agreement was lacking. The members were asked for a show of hands to agree on implementing the SM 2009. There was a unanimous decision to hold the conference as part of a signature event for MENGO.

Geetha Kumaran as Secretary General of ENSEARCH, gave some information regarding the 25th Anniversary Celebration of ENSEARCH where a dinner and different promotional activities such as tea time talks, education trips to sites (land fills, cleaner technology, mangrove reserves) will be held beginning early 2009 leading up to the 25th Anniversary Dinner on 19 August.

Kim of EPSM raised some concerns that having the SM 2009 conference on 19 August would be in competition with Ensearch in obtaining sponsorship for the 2 events. Dr Sundari expressed her concern that short time is given to the PR cum event organiser for Ensearch Anniversary dinner to include and promote SM 2009.

Dr Kalithasan of GEC notified the meeting that it would be possible to have SM 2009 during the National Recycling Week, which will be held the second week of November 2009.

Members then agreed to hold SM 2009 in the 2nd or 3rd week of November 2009, just before the school year-end holidays. This may also seem strategic in seeking funds from businesses as it is year end and the companies may be in a better position to inform MENGO on remaining monies of 2009 for Corporate Social Responsibility activities.

4.2 Civil Society Sub-Component on Biodiversity

Dr Sundari presented a 20-minute PowerPoint on the updates from the MSU (Annex 3). Below are salient points of the presentation.

Lessons Learnt Publication

The publication is entitled “*Journeys Taken, Lessons Learnt: Empowering Malaysian Communities for Conservation and Sustainable Resource Use*”. Dr Sundari informed that, the book would be printed the following week on the 14 April and 2000 copies are available. There were some discussions on the dissemination strategy of the publication. The members of MENGO could use this publication to raise their presence, profile and make known their achievements at the project sites. Simultaneously launches by individual members were encouraged to be carried out within the same week of the official launch by MENGO in Kuala Lumpur. Member organizations in Peninsular Malaysia such as CAP, SAM, MNS, WWF- Malaysia, GEC and WI will revert to MSU on the suggestions for the launch (e.g. date, venue official guest/ VIP) with their respective project partners. Mileage can be earned through this publication and the media can cover the event thereby raising the profile of civil society work in natural resource management. PACOS and BRIMAS will also use the opportunity to launch the book in East Malaysia with IP and grass roots community. Dr Dionysius reiterated that there should be no duplication of effort in disseminating the publication so that one recipient does not receive copies from more than one MENGO member.

Gender

Dr Sundari reported that much work has been done on mainstreaming Gender in biodiversity in the last 3 months. Training modules on the subject matter have been developed, formulation of indicators for mainstreaming gender, documenting good practice in gender and running of regional training programmes (Sabah, Sarawak and P. Malaysia) to CBOs and IP groups have been carried out. The toolkit on gender is almost ready for publication.

There will be a 2-day symposium on Gender and Biodiversity, examining strategies, approaches and tools for mainstreaming gender in biodiversity management in Miri, organized in collaboration with Curtin University of Technology Perth and the Curtin campus in Miri. Dr Ratna Malar is currently documenting case studies where gender intervention is seen to be of some value to benefit empowerment of communities.

Indigenous Peoples

Dr Sundari gave an overview on the achievements of the output on Indigenous Peoples and the work by the Jaringan Orang Asal Se-Malaysia. Training in community mapping and conflict resolution, awareness raising and training on UN Declaration of Rights of IPs, strengthening the JOAS secretariat and most importantly the policy and advocacy work on IP laws and legislation were some of the activities that been carried out in the reporting period.

MENGO as a Collective Voice

Mano Maniam pointed out that the *One Voice* from MENGO is important to enhance visibility of the network and seeking common opinion. The mechanism to get this right

must be explored further. It is process of empowering civil society and the collective voice must be seen to be unanimous.

A statement on policy does need prompt attention and feedback from the members of the coalition. Otherwise the essence of the message is lost. Rapid response from members on a current issue or topic for the collective good is essential for the plurality of opinion to be heard.

MSU will send out a template to members seeking topics and issues that they are interested to comment on. It must also be noted that members must have an option to sign on to agree or disagree on a particular issue.

The members of the network elect the Chair and Vice-chair and they are given the mandate to act on behalf of the coalition. This could be a way to solve the issue of a single collective voice from MENGO where rapid response from all members concerned is sought each time a press statement is released from the MSU.

A policy statement on external communication needs to be written up where all members can sign up. MSU to formulate the write up of the document on external communication.

Appraisal Team from DANIDA-Review Aide Memoir

The Review team was in Malaysia for 2 weeks in early March examining the findings and progress of all the Project Components of the Environmental Cooperation Programme between Malaysia-Denmark. The Review Aide Memoir (RAM) is the document prepared by the review mission and is attached in Annex 6. The review team was satisfied with the achievements of the Sub - component 3 on Biodiversity implemented by MENGO and it recommends that:

“The Joint Review Team recommends an extension of the support to MENGO Sub-component and CBNRM facility up to 31st July 2010. Funds will be for running of the offices/facilities and for staff and not for new projects. It should also include some technical backstopping support to CBNRM projects. More support to monitoring impacts on natural resources of CBNRM projects should be considered.”

The Strategic Plan of MENGO (2007-2102) must be reviewed by its members and examined how it can include various fund raising activities and a continuous communication with government to secure some form of government funding. MENGO strategic plan should be prioritized for effective implementation to be considered for funding.

Membership of the Network

Mano Maniam of EPSM suggested to increase participation in MENGO network and to open the invitation to those outside the MENGO fraternity, i.e. to extend to associates/partners organizations of MENGO, other civil society groups and social groups.

He pointed out that there is need to visit the current inactive members of the network and determine why these organizations are unable to participate actively in MENGO organized activities and suggested setting up a small working committee to look into the aspect of membership and recruitment. There should be a scheme for membership to include associate members status. Many Resident Associations would be interested to be a member of MENGO. We also have to acknowledge that some members would be

more active than the others in a network like MANGO. That is a fact of life. Dato' Dr Dionysius stated that he would like Mano Maniam to chair this small working committee on membership. Members who volunteered to be part of this committee are: Dato' Dr Dionysius, Mageswari S., Khaw Siok Kim, Mano Maniam and Raymond Abin.

It was reiterated in this meeting that for inactive members, they would still be informed on current events, happenings and meetings as organized by other entities. MSU plays this role and it is not the function of MANGO to delete members from the current coalition.

MENGOTalk by Dr Yunus Yassin

Dr Yunus gave an update of the e-forum discussion, which he was contracted to be the moderator of the MENGOTalk since 15 February 2009. Topics that have been posted in the E-Forum are pertinent to sustainable development, Sustainable Living and Environmental Conservation and Protection. A 3-month trial period was established to ascertain the effectiveness of such an e- forum, after which the need for the e-forum would be reviewed. He went on to explain that the forum is open to members of MANGO as well as the public. An important issue, which is currently being addressed, is the Spam or unlawful users who have registered and loaded information that is indecent. A filtering mechanism is in place where the Moderator queries the registered user who is found to be suspicious and bans the user.

This presentation can be found in Annex 4 of this report.

Technical issues on MANGO website by Senedi

The statistics of the website in terms of who logs on to www.mengo.org and the origin of the web users, etc. was presented by Karyn Mak of Senedi. There were some questions on the usage of the website and the queries were clarified. Background information to this presentation can be found in Annex 6.

Ching Yee gave a PowerPoint on *Crowdsourcing*. This is a software model on problem solving and production where by problems can be explored and addressed with little cost and at a shorter time span. It is an innovation by itself: New ways to solve problems, new ways to look at a problem, new way of doing things with an end in mind that is to provide workable solutions. This mechanism will tap on talent within the organization and geared towards more participation of the stakeholders of the organization.

It was suggested that Senedi will be invited to present this idea to the MCC and or a smaller group of interested users of the software in the near future.

For further details on *Crowdsourcing*, please refer to Annex 5.

Background papers to the meeting

Papers that were circulated to members at the AGM were:

- ❖ Review Aide Memoire – Joint Annual review Malaysia-Denmark Environmental Cooperation dated 27 March 2009 (by Danida Appraisal team)
- ❖ Statistics on the MANGO website- Dashboard (period of reporting: 21 March – 3 April, 2009) by Senedi
- ❖ Discussion Notes on SM 2009 done by Dr Sundari Ramakrishna dated 2 April 2009

All the papers as stated above can be found attached in Annex 6.

Sustainability Malaysia 2009

There was unanimous decision to hold the SM 2009 in the 2nd week of November 2009. The main objective of the conference is not to fundraise for MENGO but deliberate on substantive and pertinent issues of current environmental trends. There were some suggestions on the themes for the conference as follows:

- Sustainability in Lean and Mean Times
- Solid Waste and Climate Change
- Sustainable Consumption
- Biodiversity and Forestry
- Water and Gender
- Auditing the national resources after 10 years of the new Millennium: National Auditing of the Environment (*Has Malaysia Lost the Plot?*)
- Dato' Dr Dionysius suggested that Biodiversity Component funded by DANIDA should be reviewed and evaluated and ascertains what are the changes and impacts on the ground.
- Input into the formulation of ideas and suggestions for the 10 Malaysia Plan coordinated by Economic Planning Unit

Emphasis must be given to working with the business community such as Business Council for Sustainable Development Malaysia, Federation of Manufacturers of Malaysia and Chambers of Commerce.

Based on the brainstorming session on SM 2009, a concept note was written up by Dr Sundari Ramakrishna which appears below:

Concept Note

Sustainability Malaysia 2009- A Biennial Conference Organised by MENGO

Theme

- (a) Sustainability in Lean and Mean Times
- (b) Has Malaysia Lost the Plot?

With the economic down turn globally and in the brink of recession in Malaysia, how should **Green** practices be promoted and adopted by the different players in industry and businesses, those who regulate procedures and standards and implement policy like the government/regulatory bodies and the public at large who are at the end of the Peoples' spectrum as civil society groups.

Where is Malaysia today especially after the UN Rio Summit (1992) and 50 years of Independence since 1957? Talking stock of the way we operate businesses, depletion of natural resources, equity to natural assets and use of emerging green practices and green technologies. In short to determine what is the status of Malaysia's environment today.

Do we dismantle the current structures (legislation, framework for governance and accountability, committees in charge of environment, resource allocations) that have been implemented in Malaysia since the first Environment Quality Act (EQA) of 1974 was formulated and enforced? The EQA has not solved critical environmental issues and the quality of living standards has deteriorated in the country with advance in science, technology and education. Malaysia still faces severe problems like regular incidences of floods, slope degradation, land erosion and air pollution not to mention water shortage faced by certain communities.

There is a need to discuss the good and poor practices that have been major contributing factors in the general degradation of the environment and depletion of natural resources.

Why involve the business community?

Working with business related organizations to seek smart partnerships and selection of partners to be the main co-organizer. To seek potential keynote speakers and experts in the field of sustainable development in the new millennium. The organization that would be approached for financial support is BURSA SAHAM Malaysia – The Stock Exchange of Malaysia.

As an added value to this conference and with respect to the business community, it would help to determine the status and quality of corporate social responsibility in the country in the area of environmental protection, conservation and management of natural resources.

Target Audience

- Government
- Business
- Civil Society
- Academia

Sub topics

- Physical environment
- Air, water & land management
- Biodiversity
- Energy
- Legislation

Proposed Dates and Venue

It was suggested during the last quarter of 2009, just before the year-end school holidays and after the month of Ramadhan and Deepavali festivals. The month of November was pinned down. The organizing committee will decide whether the event will be of duration of 1 or 2 days.

Suggested dates: 16th (Mon), 17th (Tues), 24th (Tues), 25th (Wed) November 2009.

Venue: Klang Valley or Georgetown, Penang (WaterWatch Penang could help to establish contacts with University Sains Malaysia to secure the venue free of charge at its premise).

MENGO to seek sponsorship from the Government and other organizations for the rent of venue.

Organizing Committees

Two committees were proposed i.e. Technical and the Publicity/promotion. It was decided that MSU be involved in the logistics and food for the conference. This includes sending out invites, monitoring the responses, collecting registration fees, organising volunteer assistance

The MENGO Support Unit will develop the Terms of Reference for each committee. The committees will then work out a workplan with timelines and develop a budget for the work involved for reimbursable.

Meetings can either be held face to face or through the MENGOTalk e-forum discussion.

1. Technical Committee

The main objective of this committee is to develop the technical content which is the thematic areas, identify renown speakers in their respective field of expertise, suggest topics for the session, finalise the programme, review abstracts and papers.

Member organisations that are interested to sign on and work in the committee are as follows:

- (a) CAP (Mageswari)
- (b) EPSM (Kim)
- (c) PACOS (Adrian)
- (d) BRIMAS (Raymond)
- (e) WWF- M (Dr Arun/Sara)
- (f) MKS (Junaidy)
- (g) Members from the business community (to be identified)

2. Publicity /Promotion

The main objective of this committee is to seek sponsorship and funding from potential donors and the corporate sector. Be in charge of all the communication and promotional materials which includes releases to the print, broadcast and electronic media.

Member organisations that are interested to sign on and work in the committee are as follows:

- (a) WWF-M
- (b) ENSEARCH
- (c) BRIMAS
- (d) WWP
- (e) MNS

Overarching Policy for Conference on Sustainability, Malaysia 2009

The concept of sustainability and green practices must be adhered throughout the event. Use less paper, low energy requirements and usage at the conference hall, less or zero plastics during meals and refreshments; provide vegetarian meals as options at the venue of the conference. Provide each participant with a thumb drive with full paper presentations and book of abstracts. In short '*Walk the Talk*'.