

# KERATAN AKHBAR

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## All leaders should champion sustainability

POLITICS

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**T**HE world is serious about sustainability. Embracing sustainability is the only way to make sure the world continues to be a place worth living in the future.

It is about making sure that no one is left behind in a world still struggling to address the growing divide between the haves and the have nots.

Taking steps to address the gaps in the sustainability targets will guarantee future generations access to the assets that nature provides.

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the best guide for the country to make sustainability an important national agenda.

The recent establishment of the country's SDG Centre is a positive step. Hopefully, the centre is not just a way of paying lip service to sustainability. More meaningful actions must follow.

All leaders of the country must make sure sustainability is accorded the highest priority within their sphere of influence.

Business leaders must sincerely embrace ESG (environmental, social and governance) in their business dealings.



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It is good that Bursa Malaysia has made pronouncements for businesses to adopt ESG as a standard business practice.

Bank Negara Malaysia and the Securities Commission have also communicated similar signals to the business community.

The reason behind such a move should be clear to all. It is an open secret that businesses can make a difference in global sustainability.

This is because unsustainable business operations and practices form the biggest obstacle to the world achieving sustainability.

The fact that world businesses are now coming around to embrace sustainability is one positive sign of victory for those who have spent decades trying to convince businesses to go green.

Pledges by industry players alone

cannot truly deliver sustainability. Leaders and lawmakers must create the ecosystem to drive sustainability.

There is no denying that much of the commitment to sustainability comes from the need to comply with laws and regulations. Sustainability is different from Covid-19 in terms of the speed of impact.

A pandemic like Covid-19 creates almost instant pain for the world. That explains why pushing for collaboration among countries did not meet much resistance.

In contrast, the impact of sustainability and climate change on the world is a slower process. Many are not feeling the pain yet, except maybe communities that had to endure constant flooding and other natural calamities.

Even the rise in global temperatures is not generating much for many, except those who experience intense heatwaves.

But the evidence is becoming clearer, as scientists who regularly monitor the fundamentals have been reporting.

Lawmakers vying for seats in the 15th General Election (GE15) must take note of the fact that the issues surrounding sustainability must not be taken lightly.



The aftermath of a massive flood in Kampung Iboi, Baling, Kedah, in July. As natural disasters become more frequent, more people are getting more educated on sustainability issues. FILE PIC

Striving for sustainability must be clearly demonstrated in their campaign. Sustainability must be a key feature of their promises to the electorate, if they are truly honest about serving the rakyat.

This is because much of the economic and living pains that the rakyat are enduring can be traced back to the root cause that includes unsustainable practices, not only among businesses, but also in communities themselves.

Few may be aware that the food and energy crisis that the world is facing now can be traced back to unsustainable living.

This is exacerbated by the fact that laws and regulations are not effectively enforced. Many get away with shortcuts.

All these have to change if we are to truly deliver sustainability.

Most important of all is that leaders must show the way.

As a result of constant calamities, especially flash floods, many people are now more educated on sustainability issues.

Leaders who fail to accept this reality may find themselves losing favour among the electorate in GE15. Parties that pledge to support sustainability in their manifestos will win voters.

I know of one party that has already made that pledge through a book by their leader titled *SCRIPT* which champions sustainability.

Rightfully, all GE15 manifestos must place sustainability high on their list of promises.

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