



Addressing Environmental, Social and Ethical Challenges of the Annual Haze in Southeast Asia from a Singapore Perspective

Speaker: Ms Zhang Wen
People's Movement to Stop Haze (PM Haze)

Chair: Ms Elvagrís Segovia
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Place: Earth Lab, AS2-02-03, NUS

Abstract

Transboundary haze is an annual air pollution crisis that has severe impacts on human health, environment, society, and economy. Therefore, the bioethics principles “social responsibility and health”, “equality, justice and equity”, “protection of the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity” and “protecting future generations”, provide the ethical imperative to take action on haze. The haze originates mainly from unsustainable agricultural practices in Indonesia and Malaysia carried out by the palm oil, pulpwood and timber industries. These industries are linked to buyers and financiers, including from Singapore.

To tackle the haze issue, all stakeholders must collaborate. As chair of ASEAN in 2018, Singapore should set itself the following priorities: (i) initiate and support the harmonisation of sustainability standards across the region, (ii) promote sustainable finance and (iii) increase its contribution to the ASEAN Haze Fund to implement the Haze-free Roadmap, especially in the matter of peatland restoration.

About the Speaker

Zhang Wen is an advocate for clean air and Executive Director at PM Haze, a Singaporean non-profit that works on the research, outreach and advocacy of the haze issue. Zhang Wen has a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from National University of Singapore. She completed the Masters of Environment Management from National University of Singapore in 2015 and embraced her passion of protecting the environment by working with civil societies in Singapore. She leads the public outreach activities at PM Haze which raise awareness of sustainable palm oil. She also pioneered the business outreach activities which encourage food service companies to use sustainable palm-based cooking oil. Her effort resulted in the first two Singaporean restaurants switching to sustainable palm oil in October 2017. She currently works on developing activities to empower ordinary citizens to advocate for clean air in Singapore. She also builds partnerships with private and public sector to increase adoption of sustainable palm oil.

About PM Haze:

People's Movement to Stop Haze, affectionately known as PM Haze, is a non-profit focusing on outreach, research and advocacy on haze related concerns. Steering consumption patterns towards sustainable palm oil as well as assisting Indonesian and Malaysian farmers to create a sustainable livelihood are 2 main ways we empower our community.

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