

Food for Thought

Dear friends, welcome to my piara.com.my. You are invited to give comments on the blog entries below.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015: SEVEN BILLION DREAMS. ONE PLANET. CONSUME WITH CARE.

SUNDAY, JUNE 07, 2015 | Comments(0)

LETTER TO EDITOR - 04th JUNE 2015 (THURSDAY)

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2015: SEVEN BILLION DREAMS. ONE PLANET. CONSUME WITH CARE.

World Environment Day is celebrated every 5th June. The theme for this year's celebration is accurately positioning a global concern, 'Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume With Care.'. Three core issues are highlighted in this year's celebration and those are Water, Energy and Food. Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER) would like to highlight these interconnected issues. Let's dig deeper on Malaysian perspective of 30 million dreams; it's just 0.43% of the global dream.

Water

Based on latest statistics (2013), Malaysia has 488 water treatment plants with 18,421 million litres per day (MLD) design capacity and producing 15,536 MLD of treated water. In 1983, Malaysia had estimated 32,693 km of pipes laid to supply treated water and in 2013, close to 138, 669 km of pipes are made available to supply water to all categories of consumers. In 2013, 61.5% of treated water is consumed by domestic consumers.

Total water consumption is basically divided into domestic, industry (including commercial) and agriculture use which uses 17%, 21% and 62% respectively. However, almost 2/3 of treated water is consumed by domestic sector. This is mainly because many industries and agricultural activities draw water directly from nature for their use.

Development and change in land-use is making availability of raw water scarce. Under the pretext of development, we pollute the very water we consume and process to provide treated water becomes more expensive. The concentrated development (with high population density) makes it more difficult to cater increasing demand for treated water.

Our policies have turned a blind eye on high water usage (raw water) in the industrial and agricultural sector. Wastewater from these sectors (point and non-point source) is increasing with the rate of growth. In another 5 years, we aspire to be a developed nation. Do we have the paradigm shift to manage our water resources?

11th Malaysia Plan identified tariff as one of the mechanisms to be used for water demand management to encourage water efficiency. Is it feasible? The answer is NO! The only way to become water efficient is to ensure the people value the importance of water and tariff would not be able to achieve that. People will continue with their consumption pattern and pay if they do not understand the importance of water. Furthermore, revision of tariff is suppose to assist water companies to recover capital expenditure, operational expenditure as well as regulated profit. Why should the consumers pay higher tariff when the capital expenditure, operational expenditure and regulated profit are recovered? Malaysia will be the world leading example if we could achieve equitable tariff while the people are water efficient. It will be the real achievement to be proud of.

As a start, AWER has developed an online tool for domestic consumers to be water efficient via Catch d' Hydro (www.water.org.my). This online tool can be used by both local and international community. AWER used "gate to gate" method from Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) approach to derive Catch d' Hydro and establish a water footprint for a household.

Catch d' Hydro is divided into two main types of activities. The first option is to use preset values for those whom are not sure of the faucets they use at home. The second option is to measure yourself which increases the accuracy on data collected. A final result will be derived from the data and it will give an overall outline of water consumption for various activities at your home and comparative results. In addition to that, tips will be 'tailor-made' based on activities that waste water. It will assist consumers to focus on root of problems in being Water Efficient.

Energy

Malaysia's Primary Energy Supply per Capita (toe/person) has increase from 0.79 in 1980 to 3.03 in 2013. Transportation sector is having the highest Final Energy Demand in 2013 at 22357 ktoe or 43.34% of total final energy demand. Our electricity demand per capita (kWh/person) has increased from 626 kWh in 1980 to 4110 kWh in 2013.

When muscle power is replaced with tools that operate using electricity or other type of energy resources, we increase our energy demand. While attempts are being made to explore renewable energy resources, these resources also come with risks associated with nature. There is a limitation, a line that is drawn by law of nature.

Being energy efficient is another point to start. AWER has developed an online tool to assist all categories of consumers to identify the 'thief

that uses most electricity at his/her premises. Our Click d' Thief (www.click.org.my) energy audit online tool give easy steps with animation to identify high electricity consuming equipments to assist consumers to become more energy efficient. We are under taking more research work to expand many of our solutions to reach to consumers (of all categories) via online tools.

Nowadays, panic will be unleashed when a housing estate experience a black out. Have we ever wondered, the life with scarce energy resources in decades to come?

Food

Agriculture activities become a major water user (inefficient one) and a major polluter (non-point source pollution). Uncontrolled large scale agriculture activities bring forth disasters such as flood in Cameron Highlands and Kelantan.

While we need water to grow food, energy has also played an important role in pumping water, processing agriculture products, enhancing agriculture techniques and many more to increase agriculture output.

Besides this, waste generated in this sector also has high potential in being converted into renewable resource like biogas and electricity. In addition to that, reduction of water usage in agriculture sector is also vital as it will increase availability of raw water for other purposes.

With proper technology applications and innovation, water and energy can work its miracle to bring affordable, fresh and nutritious food close to your working and living space without middlemen. It is not a dream. But, can we make a paradigm shift? Can concentrated and soil free agriculture mooted in city centres?

What future do we have?

The 11th Malaysia Plan did adopt many of AWER's suggestions in the field of water and energy. Implementation is another issue that needs to be monitored closely. But, this is not enough. We are just 0.43% of the 7 billion dreams with just one planet to share.

Imagine a future with only a small percentage (perhaps single digit) of people has the access to resources such as water, energy and food. The rest are in the state of chaos and fighting for resources. People may kill each other for a bottle of water. This may be the extreme that we never want to admit. But, it could be the future that lies ahead if we never learn to manage our resources.

The future is in your hands. We can build a better and more sustainable future. It is just that we need to draw a line between need and greed. All of us need to realign our dreams. So, consume with care because we only have one earth to live in and share!

Piarapakaran S.

President

Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER)

[GO BACK](#)

Comments (0 Posted)



No Record Found!