

**Sustainable Living in Malaysia:  
Living Well Within the Ecological Limits of Our Planet**

Friday, 15 & Saturday, 16 June 2007, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

Closing Remarks, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Internationalisation), University  
of Malaya

**Salutations.**

“The Global Environment Outlook” published by UN in 2002 states that 15% of the earth’s surface is degraded and predicts that over 70% of the planet will be suffering from the adverse impacts from human activities. In view of this grim scenario, and the limited achievements in sustainable development in the last decade, there is a concerted effort globally to raise awareness through environmental-related initiatives to conserve and preserve our natural resources.

It is therefore, both timely and appropriate, that this conference on ‘Sustainable Living in Malaysia: Living Well within the Ecological Limits of Our Planet’ was organized to highlight the importance of reducing the country’s ecological footprint in preparation of the years ahead.

I would like to express my thanks to the organizers and participants in making this conference a success and it is my hope that the interest and awareness generated with respect to the ecological footprint and sustainable living will continue long after this conference has ended.

From the perspectives of ‘Malaysia in the next 50 years and beyond’, the discussions and deliberations over the past one and a half days have emphasized the role that different stakeholders need to play to meet the challenges associated with sustainability both in growth and development.

I would like to acknowledge that education still plays a key role in addressing the challenges of sustainability. As such universities and institutes of higher learning can contribute more forcefully through knowledge creation and sharing.

I hope that the outputs of this conference will provide an important basis for the re-examining of our own education policies and goals. All disciplines of study, the natural sciences, the physical sciences and the social sciences need to be closely connected in a complimentary and integrated manner in an overall vision of building the capacity for sustainable development. It is this capacity that will be needed to support a new and different path for the progress of our society and country.

We are also fortunate to be here today at the end of this one and half day conference where we have had the opportunity to witness Prof. William Rees, the originator of the Ecological Footprint, a wonderful concept of measuring growth and development in its true sense, in the well-being of the human population and the well-being of the earth.

We have had the opportunity to not only learn from Prof. Rees but also about ourselves and our country, as Malaysia prepares on its journey in the years ahead. We know that we need to now do things in a different way...

Thank you.