

MSAF AND ASM COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE TROPICS

27 OCTOBER 2021

The International Conference on Tropical Sciences (TropSc) 2021, organised by the Mahathir Science Award Foundation and the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, on 25 – 27 October 2021 in Kuala Lumpur,

Reaffirming the principles upheld by the

- UN General Assembly Resolution: The Future We Want
- UN General Assembly Resolution: Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- UN General Assembly Resolution on the International Day of the Tropics and
- Other declarations related to the Tropics,

Recognizing that tropical countries have made significant progress, but they face a number of challenges that necessitate concentrated attention across a range of developmental factors in order to achieve long-term development,

Noting that the Tropics, collectively, *inter alia*, hosts 80% of the world's biodiversity, 45% of world's forest and 54% of the world's renewable water resources, and that warm tropical oceans play a critical role in regulating the Earth's climate,

Valuing the potential of the Tropics where, by 2050, the region will host more than half of the world's population and two-thirds of its children, and the reality that 82 % of the world's living languages are spoken in the Tropics,

Cognizant of the unique problems the Tropics confront as a result of climate change and economic pressures on resources, as well as the global ramifications of these concerns,

Emphasizing that 85 % of the poorest people in the world live in the Tropics, and that tropical diseases annually affect more than 1 billion people in the Tropics,

Acknowledging the role of governments, private sectors, academia, scientists, youth, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, indigenous people and local communities,

Noting that sixteen panel sessions were convened on significant issues concerning the Tropics and that each session has its own set of detailed recommendations in its Report.

1. *Proposes the following main recommendations:*

- Address existential threats to the sustainable development of the Tropics,
- Strengthen multilateral interactions and governance in the Tropics through building coalitions and institutions, establishing genuine partnership, instilling political will and ensuring science informs policy,
- Affirm that tropical ecological systems are fragile and thus require sustainable harnessing of tropical biodiversity and genetic resources while delivering benefits for national, regional and global wellbeing,
- Recognize that there are problems of climate change that are specific to the Tropics which must be resolved through global cooperation and through democratising and enhancing capacities and participation of the Tropical countries in international climate negotiations,
- Strengthen health systems in the Tropics by designing and deploying digitally-enabled solutions to enhance the quality and reach of vital health information and services for the most disadvantaged,
- Support medicines security through the innovative and sustainable harnessing of tropical resources to meet regional and global disease needs,
- Improve scientific understanding and ensure equitable access to therapeutic solutions, integral intervention tools and technologies, in addressing existing and emerging diseases in the Tropics at the interface of human, animal and the environment,
- Adopt, adapt and contextualize frontier technologies for public health, agriculture, food production, and engineering in the Tropics through research and development, enabling policies and regulations, investment and capacity building,
- Acknowledge the changing landscape of tropical agriculture in the context of climate change, land use, demographic shifts, policies and regulations, and technological solutions to address gaps between the various stakeholders as well as the social and financial well-being of the agricultural community,
- Benefit from the diversification of economies beyond land-based activities in delivering sustainable and inclusive Blue Growth in the Tropics,

- Profit from downstream conversion of tropical natural resources into high value leading-edge materials and products for higher economic growth and a more balanced trade between economies,
 - Galvanize the advantages the Tropics presents in adopting and accelerating the transition to renewable energy in the Tropics,
 - Take action on the need to set up a federation of data platforms on Tropical Biodiversity that promotes data sharing through FAIR principles,
 - Take into account the special characteristics of the Tropics in architecture and urban planning in prioritizing people in the development of cities,
 - Recognize, respect and support indigenous peoples, their knowledge and traditional methods, and local communities in addressing sustainable living in the Tropics,
 - Emphasize the role of youth as the next generation of climate experts who will create a broad movement, take action and make changes; capitalize on inspiring narratives around science and technology to solve problems of climate change in the Tropics through galvanizing youth and providing inclusive capacity building,
 - Stress the role of youth in the future of the Tropics and the need to empower youth and cultivate resilience through embracing science and technology, developing entrepreneurial and innovative mindset and acquiring employability skills.
2. **Invites** Nations, the United Nations, organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, civil society organisations and local communities to pay particular attention to the needs of the Tropics: its peoples and its unique and special environment; and address the specific challenges and invest in emerging opportunities that the Tropics presents through
- International collaboration between academia, industry, and government,
 - Adopting cross-cutting approaches, multisectoral action and Open Science,
 - Ensuring that science informs policy and
 - Undertaking strong country responsibility within the framework of global goals,
3. **Recommends** the convening of the next International Conference on Tropical Sciences (TropSc) under the umbrella of an Alliance of the Tropics.