

Parliamentary reply by DPM Teo Chee Hean on personal responsibility for climate changes

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES

Assoc Prof Tan Kheng Boon Eugene asked the Prime Minister in view of the recent National Climate Change Secretariat survey (a) what are the likely reasons for the decline in public concern and the lower sense of personal responsibility and action on climate change issues; and (b) what strategies are being envisaged to better outreach to Singaporeans on climate change issues with a view to enhancing personal responsibility and action.

Response from Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean for Prime Minister: Findings from 2013 Public Perception Survey

The National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS) commissioned a survey from September to October 2013 to gauge public perception on climate change. The survey found that about 7 in 10 (70.2%) respondents were concerned about climate change, marginally (3.6%) lower than the previous survey in 2011. However, only 39% of respondents felt that individuals should be mainly responsible for taking action on climate change compared to 56% in the previous survey.

The results could have been influenced by the severe trans-boundary haze that affected Singapore in June 2013. This is because half of the respondents (50.6%) cited "clearing of forests" as the key contributor to climate change. As there is not much that an individual could do to prevent trans-boundary haze, this could have led to more respondents looking towards the Government to take action.

On the other hand, over 80% of respondents indicated that they adopt climate-friendly behaviour -- they turn off electrical appliances at the mains when the appliances are not in use, choose appliances which carry an energy label, use public transport or car pool when possible and practise the 3Rs (i.e. Reduce, Re-use and Recycle). This is an improvement over the 2011 survey where over 70% of respondents said that they were doing so.

Public Outreach on Climate Change

NCCS adopts a whole-of-nation approach, working closely with stakeholders in the people, private and public sectors to raise public awareness about climate change and encourage greater personal action. It reaches out to Singaporeans through community events, schools and the social media. For example, to generate greater awareness on climate change among young Singaporeans, NCCS organises the National Climate Change Competition each year for students. Through the competition, students produce videos to help to spread the message of climate change and what individuals can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A new climate change exhibition will also be launched at the Science Centre by the end of this year. Undertaken by NCCS, the Science Centre and the Meteorological Service, the exhibition will help Singaporeans better understand the science behind climate change, through fun and interactive displays.