

Water Resource Sustainability: Integrated Legislative Approach in Wastewater Management in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015, as well as the implementation of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will mark the eighth year in September 2023. Nonetheless, as we approach the halfway point, our progress in achieving the objectives or goals remains unsatisfactory, not least due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of which is related to the sixth SDG that envisions access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene as the most fundamental requirement for human health and well-being. According to the 2022 SDG report, the global water stress level stayed at an acceptable 18.6% in 2019. However, it was further reported that Southern Asia and Central Asia reported water stress levels of above 75%, whereas Northern Africa reported a serious water stress level of over 100%. Since 2015, water stress levels in Western Asia and Northern Africa have increased dramatically. Unless progress quadruples, billions of people will lack access to potable drinking water and sanitation by 2030 due to rapid population increase, urbanization, and rising water demands from agricultural, industrial, and energy sectors that are driving up water demand. Despite the fact that the world's usable freshwater supply is only about 1%, the problems generally faced are ensuring the continued supply and access to this "liquid gold" regardless of geographical or economic boundaries. Thus, immense interest and development in wastewater initiatives as a source of water and nutrients have gained momentum at national and international levels including in Malaysia. Even though Malaysia receives an abundance of precipitation due to its equatorial location, it is nonetheless susceptible to water security and wastewater management issues. Effective national policies and adequate legislation governing wastewater management are implemented to help achieve sustainable water resources in most countries.

Keywords: Wastewater, Legislation, Sustainability, Malaysia