

Most Singaporeans worry about impact of climate change but few think their actions matter

SINGAPORE - Singapore is not a big country by land size but each person here produces more carbon emissions than his counterpart in much bigger countries such as Britain, Switzerland or France.

But a National Climate Change Secretariat's Climate Change Public Perception Survey in 2016 showed that over a third of respondents in Singapore believed that their individual actions would not make a difference to climate change.

This is even though nine out of 10 indicated that they were concerned about the effects of climate change on future generations.

With this in mind, tackling climate change cannot be the work of the Government alone.

That was the message Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, had for people and businesses on Friday morning (Jan 26), when he launched Singapore's Year of Climate Action - a year-long national initiative aimed at raising awareness of climate change - at City Square Mall.

To kickstart the year, he launched a Climate Action Pledge, which individuals and companies can make to publicly declare their readiness to take action against climate change.

For example, individuals can pledge to recycle, or opt to take public transport, walk or cycle; while organisations can pledge to raise office temperatures by 1 to 2 deg C. More than 210 pledges have been made so far.

[2018: Year of Climate Action](#)

A climate action blog is also up on the Ministry for the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) website at <https://climateaction.sg>, which will serve as a resource portal for those looking for ways to cut their carbon footprint.

Urging individuals and companies to do their part to reduce their carbon footprint, Mr Masagos said: "We feel it is important to raise the level of national consciousness around the need to take individual and collective action to fight climate change for a sustainable Singapore. Because the Government cannot do it alone."

Climate change refers to the human-induced warming of the Earth, due to deforestation and the excessive consumption of resources that results in the production of heat-trapping greenhouse gases.

[Booths set up at the launch of Year of Climate Action at City Square Mall](#)

Singapore contributes just 0.11 per cent of global emissions but ranks 26th out of 142 countries in terms of emissions per capita, according to 2015 data from the International Energy Agency.

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"This is a year when we will join forces with all of you here, plus many other parties across Singapore and beyond, to rally everybody to take action to reduce our carbon footprint and fight climate change," Mr Masagos said on Friday, even as he reaffirmed Singapore's commitment to meeting its targets under the Paris Agreement.

In conjunction with its Year of Climate Action, Singapore plans to tap its chairmanship of Asean to roll out regional initiatives on climate change, among other things.

Singapore will host a Special Asean Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change in July, said Mr Masagos, and this will be an important meeting for Asean to show leadership on climate action.

"It will send a strong signal internationally that we in Asia remain fully committed to the Paris Agreement and will take collective action to tackle climate change," Mr Masagos said.

In November last year, he had announced 2018 to be Singapore's Year of Climate Action at an international climate change conference in Bonn, Germany, to instil awareness among citizens and inspire them to act.

The outreach events undertaken as part of Singapore's Year of Climate Action will supplement the country's existing suite of strategies that affect mainly industries.

[Masagos Zulkifli on why Singapore decided to designate 2018 as its Year of Climate Action](#)

Amendments to the Energy Conservation Act made last year, for example, slap harsher punishments on large polluters for being energy inefficient. A carbon tax will also be implemented from next year to force large emitters to find ways to reduce emissions.

From the ground-up level, there are already encouraging initiatives.

[Inch Chua's climate change song for the Year of Climate Action](#)

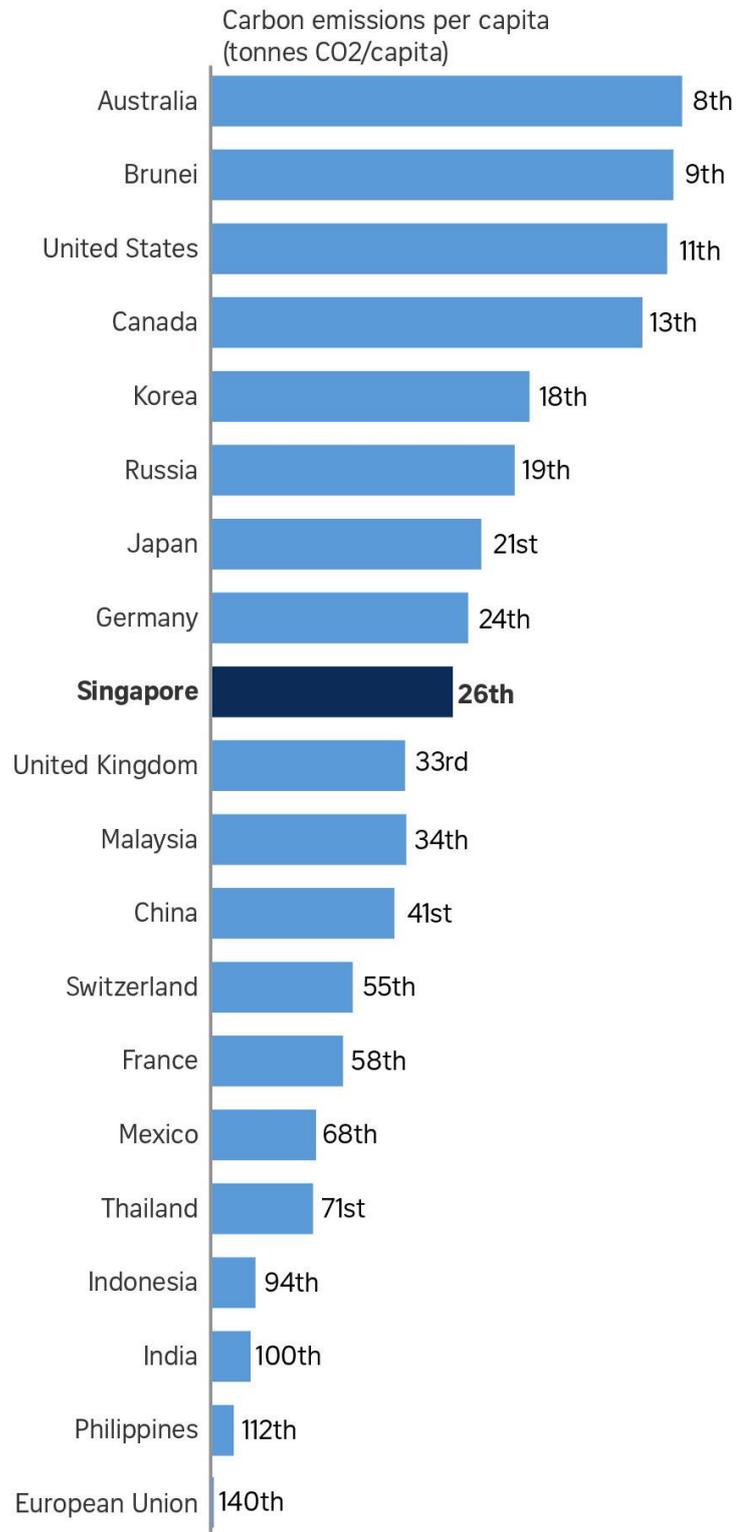
For instance, National University of Singapore undergraduate Pamela Low, a member of a non-governmental organisation called Singapore Youth for Climate Action, has partnered the university to roll out a zero-waste roadshow which encourages people to eat-in, or to use their own takeaway containers if they have to eat out.

The Nature Society (Singapore) is also planning to organise activities such as talks and forums to show how climate change is linked to the conservation of biodiversity.

For example, rising sea surface temperatures led Singapore's corals to suffer from the longest bleaching incident on record in 2016.

Per Capita Emissions

Singapore ranks 26th out of 142 countries in terms of emissions per capita based on the latest International Energy Agency data. This is largely due to our small size and dense population.



Source: NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE SECRETARIAT,
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Environmental scientist Pui Cuifen, 36, is on a personal campaign to urge marathon organisers to become greener. This includes measures such as providing recycling bins along marathon routes to recycle cups, and collecting bananas usually given out at such events for composting.

"I'm not a regular runner, but the amount of waste generated at these events - such as cups thrown everywhere and towels used for a few seconds - provides a visual reminder of how much resources are being used," said Ms Pui.

Fighting climate change on all fronts

Singapore has launched its Year of Climate Action, and will be moving on all fronts to help people and companies realise the impact of climate change on the Republic. The Straits Times looks at what people can do to reduce their carbon footprint.

1

Singapore already affected by climate change





Rise in temperature

- 2016 was Singapore's hottest year since 1929
- Mean annual temperature was 28.4 deg C in 2016, 0.1 deg C higher than the next hottest year
- Eight of the 10 warmest years in Singapore have all occurred in the 21st century





Prolonged dry weather

- Two record dry spells during January to March 2014. One lasted a record 27 days.
- February 2014 was the driest month since 1869. Just 0.2mm rainfall (long-term monthly average is 112.8mm)
- Desalination and Newater plants operated near full capacity to meet water demand



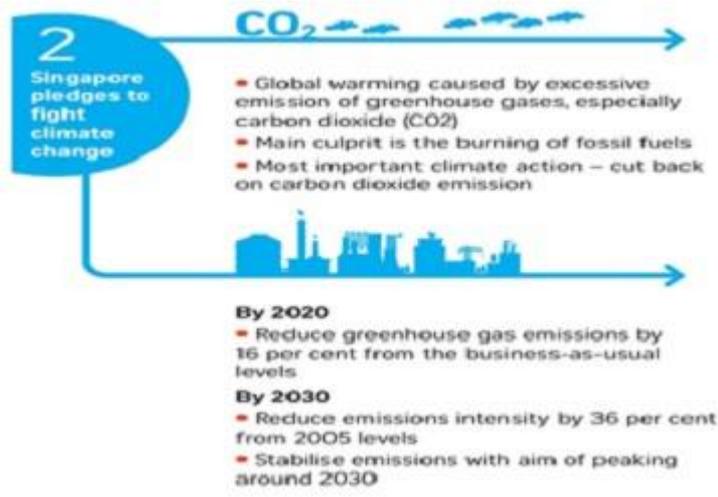


More intense rainfall

- Major flash floods in 2010, 2011 and 2013

Harm to Our Biodiversity and Greenery

- A plankton bloom resulted in farmers losing over 600 tons of fish
- Biodiversity harmed by changes in temperature and rainfall
- Strong winds damage or uproot trees
- More bushfires due to temperature increase and low rainfall



3R zero waste lifestyle

- Buy, order and take only what you need
- Reduce, reuse, recycle
- Produce less waste

Conserve water and electricity

- Set air-conditioner at 25 deg C or warmer
- Use appliances with higher efficiency ratings and more ticks
- Adopt smart home technology



Go car-lite

- Cycle, walk or use public transport
- Choose vehicles that use clean fuel

Responsible production and consumption

- Buy from companies that do not engage in forest burning practices to clear land
- Choose products with the Singapore Green Label

Source: MEWR
ST FILE PHOTOS
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Climate Action 2018

Take Action Today, For A Sustainable Future
Reduce Our Carbon Footprint

Projection for Singapore By End Of Century

Daily temperatures could rise by **1.4°C to 4.6°C**

Wet months likely to be **wetter**, and dry months **drier**. More **intense** and **frequent** heavy rainfall

Mean sea levels could rise by up to **about 1 metre**

1 Singapore Already Affected By Climate Change



- 2017 was the warmest year on record that was not influenced by El Niño
- 8 of the 10 warmest years in Singapore have all occurred in the 21st century



- 2 record dry spells over period Jan-Mar 2014. Lasted a record-breaking 27 days.
- Feb 2014 was the driest month since 1869. Just 0.2 mm rainfall (long-term monthly average is 112.8 mm)
- Desalination and NEWater plants operated near full capacity to meet water demand



- Major flash floods in 2010, 2011 and 2013
- Harm to Our Biodiversity and Greenery
- A plankton bloom resulted in farmers losing over 600 tons of fish
- Biodiversity harmed by changes in temperature and rainfall
- Strong winds damage or uproot trees
- More bushfires due to temperature increase and low rainfall

2 Singapore Pledges To Fight Climate Change



- Global warming caused by excessive emission of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- Main culprit is the burning of fossil fuels
- Most important climate action - cut back on carbon dioxide emission

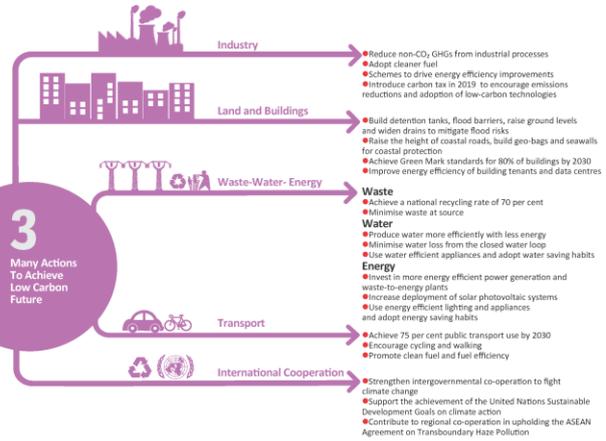
By 2020

- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 16 per cent from the business-as-usual levels

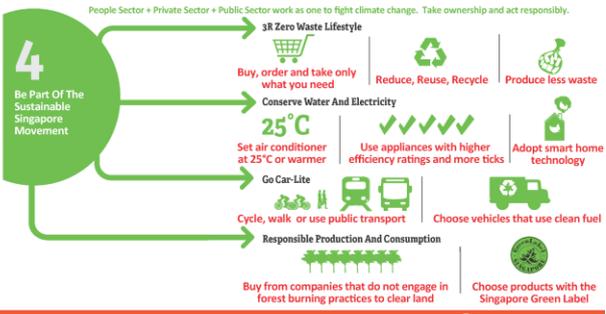
By 2030

- To reduce emissions intensity by 36 per cent from 2005 levels
- To stabilise emissions with aim of peaking around 2030

3 Many Actions To Achieve Low Carbon Future



4 Be Part Of The Sustainable Singapore Movement



Pledge to take climate action on www.mewr.gov.sg/climateaction

Share your #ClimateActionSG stories with others online!

Singapore is vulnerable to the effects of climate change.
All of us must take action today for a sustainable future.

