

GLOBAL CHANGE RELATED RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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During the IGBP Chiang Mai Regional Meeting in early 1992, a reasonably comprehensive report on various research activities in Malaysia and relevant to IGBP was presented. It identified 7 primary institutions/organizations which currently undertake research complementing each other's work and thus contribute to the IGBP related activities. The report also identified key research areas at each institution.

Since this report has been already published¹, it is not necessary to repeat the contents here. Instead the reader is referred to the published report. A period of 10 months since the Chiang Mai meeting is rather a short time frame and one can only say that the activities involving air pollution related studies (Agriculture University) and ozone monitoring (Meteorological Service) and other similar projects are continuing. Certainly these programmes will be broadened in the coming years.

Perhaps the most significant development in this period has been the physical infrastructure development at the University of Science Malaysia which has a special research focus on atmospheric ozone, minor constituents and ultraviolet radiation. The University recently allocated a spacious 2-storey building at the main campus to house the newly established Atmospheric Research Unit. A photometric platform has been constructed and facilities for balloon-borne payload launching and data reception are nearing completion. Initially, an intensive 'Balloon-borne Ozone Layer Structure' campaign will be launched. Subsequently the system is expected to be used for other constituents relevant to global change research.

The second major development is the completion of Penang Observatory Centre (Phase 1) known as Sheikh Tahir Astronomical Centre (built by Penang State Government, it is located 20 km away from the campus on the western side of the Island). In October 1992, the arrangements were finalized for the Center's administration and future expansion by the University of Science Malaysia. There are immediate plans to expand the Centre with the acquisition of surrounding land (expected to include about 50-60 acres eventually).

One of the major objectives of the Sheikh Tahir Centre is to establish it as a 'cooperative research' base for tropical atmospheric studies. At the IGBP-Asian meeting held late last year in Singapore, the need to establish an Asian Network of Research relating to 'atmospheric ozone and ultraviolet radiation' was identified². This matter was also discussed at a SCOPE meeting early this year³. I have followed up on this assignment entrusted to me at the Singapore meeting and await responses from various researchers throughout the tropical region. Once these responses are received and processed, we would be able to determine the direction in which we should move.

We certainly hope that our newly set-up facilities in Penang can be enhanced and utilized for coordinated research and training programme so that real scientific development in the tropical region can be realized. In this direction, the University has also initiated a programme to develop and enhance the trained manpower in order to build a core professional group.

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1. Report from the START Regional Meeting for Southeast Asia, IGBP Report No. 22, 1992, p. 61.
 2. I.B. Babuji and R.R. Daniel (Ed.), A Report on Asian Planning Meeting for IGBP, Singapore, 12-14 December 1991, COSTED' 1992
 3. Effects of Increased Ultraviolet Radiation on Biological Systems, SCOPE, 1992