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NOTE

by

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on

“The Role of the Thai Senate in Combatting Climate Change”

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The Role of the Thai Senate in Combatting Climate Change

Climate change is currently one of the most severe threats facing the whole world, and it has become a global agenda in 2015 all member states of the United Nations adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as a call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of peace and prosperity by 2030. Realizing the threats of climate change, Thailand formulated the first National Strategic Plan on Climate Change 2008-2013 and it recently reinforced with the Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2050 providing a long-term national framework for climate change and low carbon growth promotion according to sustainable development principle, a policy framework for the development of mechanisms and tools, government agencies and relevant organizations with a framework for detailed action plans and budget allocation to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2065. These are reasons why all Thai sectors should play an active role in combatting climate change.

Thai Senate and Climate Change Issues

In this connection, the Thai Senate recognizes the significance of climate change as a global disaster and always raised up this issue either in the international level

or in the national level. The President of the Thai Senate also initiated the environmental development policy on protecting the environment and improving climate change situation for the Senate and the Secretariat of the Senate to collaborate and move forward to its environmental development, pollution prevention, efficient use of energy resources, and properly use of digital technology for enhancing its Secretariat to become “eco-friendly workplace”. Subsequently, the Secretary General of the Senate put this policy as one of the top priorities in annual action plan 2021. After the adoption of the new environmental policy, coincidentally, the Secretariat was preparing to move to the new parliament building. So, it was a perfect time for making the new operational plan for environmental sustainability, and energy and water conservation measures. Therefore, the Secretariat of the Senate adopts “**Green Office Standard**” from the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion and Faculty of Environment and Resources Studies of Mahidol University. This “Green Office Standard” was developed to lessen resource consumption and wastage in the work process, achieve savings and minimizing carbon emission from the office’s operations in the environment,

Our Journey to Green Senate

To apply the Green Office Standard throughout the workplace, we began with the Green Office promotion campaign for the Senators, its officials and related personnel to understand and collaborate in protecting environment as well as increase its

environmental friendly operations and activities to become a Green Office organization. Furthermore, the Secretary General of the Senate encourages all eighteen bureaus to fully achieve the Green Office Standard.

Currently, the Secretariat of the Senate staff are called for the implementation of Green Office Standard as following examples such as reducing the consumption of energy and resources in the office (electricity, water, oil and paper), abiding the environmental laws and regulations (fire extinguisher installation, emergency training and rehearsal, fire evacuation and smoking area), creating eco-friendly management in the office (the sanitary dining area, green area and waste system management), promoting eco-friendly consumption behavior of the staff and the use of 3 R concepts (Reduce/Reuse/Recycle). Moreover, to promote the Green workplace, the Secretariat of the Senate also embraces the use of the digital technology as follows;

- Developing a digital transformation strategy that promoting the eco-friendly activities throughout the office

- Adopting a digital approach for parliamentary work such as promoting the use of electronic documents, providing the tablet devices to the Senators, inventing the new applications for more convenient services to the Senators and people

With our goal to receive the Green Office Award, the Secretariat of the Senate set our 3 year roadmap from 2021-2023. In 2023, the Secretariat already applied for the

Green Office Award from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand and the result is not yet announced. However, by providing this paper, we would love to share our story and the lessons we learnt from our journey to Green Senate as follows;

The most significant factor for our story is “leadership.” Leadership is not only from the President or the Secretariat of the Senate but also from assigned people in the organization. With the leadership, these people can encourage others to engage in the eco-friendly activities in the workplace and also in their daily life.

The next factor is the engagement of the Senators, officials, staff members and concerning people. To get all people to participate in this journey, it starts with their awareness of the climate change issues and their consciousness. Thus, the “communication” is very important in this process especially to cascade the goal and direction of the Green Senate Plan.

Lastly, the Culture, which is the way that people live in the workplace is crucial for the implementation of our Green Journey. We found out that to build the Green culture we need the role model not only one but many of them. Starting with the collaboration from the senators and senior staff members, led by the Secretary General of the Senate, they adopt the 3 R concepts and also lead by example in order to encourage others to accept this new way of living in the workplace and daily life.

In conclusion, although Thai Senate and its Secretariat is still in the journey to fully become the Green Senate with the long term goal to motivating all concerning personnel for resource efficiency, energy conservation, reduce pollution and wastage in the offices' work process and recycle the generated waste and these behavioral changes will lead to environmental sustainability. We do believe that with our strong commitment and our duties as global citizens to help protect environment and promote sustainable planet before handing it to the next generation and we will definitely achieve the ultimate goal of the Green parliament of Thailand, together with the House of Representatives in the very near future.

Thank you