

NATIONAL CONSUMER CAMPAIGN 2008 - 2012

3K



**change begins
with me**

Towards Mindful Consumption

Organised by



Campaign Partners

PETRONAS



Message

It cannot be denied that the life of the consumer around the globe today is becoming increasingly tougher and more challenging. Increasing fuel and food prices, financial melt-downs, and increasing crime are some of the pressing issues. Not only do these issues impact directly on the quality of life of the consumer, he also faces a future of greater uncertainty and unpredictability.

How does the Malaysian consumer respond to these challenges? Old habits of blaming others and expecting someone else, especially the government, to do something no longer work. In this new global scenario, the power and influence of governments are becoming increasingly limited.

Events and decisions are being determined in other international centres, such as Washington or London, and these decisions have both a direct and indirect impact on the Malaysian consumer. It is time the consumer recognises this new scenario, and prepares himself with the right attitude, knowledge and skills to face these challenges.

In light of this new reality, the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (FOMCA), in partnership with the National Council of Women Organisations (NCWO), Malaysian Youth Council (MBM), the Congress of Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS) and PETRONAS is undertaking a four-year (2008 - 2012) National Consumer Campaign called the 3K Campaign (or *Kempen Konsumer Kebangsaan*).

The theme of the Campaign is "Change Begins With Me".

This is a down-to-earth Campaign to create awareness and educate Malaysian consumers, targeting youths, women, and workers, to challenge their beliefs and attitudes about many of their spending and consumer habits, to move them to adapting a more a sustainable lifestyle. The Campaign aims to create awareness as well as provide knowledge and skills to enable Malaysian consumers to adapt a more sustainable lifestyle.

Through this Campaign, it is hoped that Malaysians, will develop positive coping skills and, despite these challenges, feel more confident in their abilities as well as acquire the appropriate skills and knowledge towards being more effective consumers.

Change Begins With Me

Datuk Marimuthu Nadason
President, FOMCA



National Consumer Campaign 2008 - 2012

On 6th of May 2008, the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (FOMCA) together with the National Council of Women Organizations (NCWO), the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM) and the Congress of Union Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to undertake the National Consumer Campaign, for 4 years, from 2008 to 2012. The campaign is called the 3K Campaign (Kempen Konsumer Kebangsaan). PETRONAS joined the Campaign on 1st January 2009.

The campaign is a response to a deteriorating world economic situation that has brought on a negative impact on the lives of Malaysian consumers.

- Food prices have gone up
- Oil prices are extremely volatile
- We are facing Climate Changes
- Water scarcity is the next looming crises
- We are facing a Financial Crisis

How are Malaysian consumers responding to this situation?

- Some become angry and blame the government, or oil producers, or greedy middle men.
- Others expect the government to continue to increase subsidies, so that they can continue to maintain their old lifestyles.

Yet in truth, these are global factors over which the government has almost no control. Malaysians are used to their relatively comfortable lifestyle. Change is difficult.

Instead of blaming others, the only effective way of to cope with this situation is through lifestyle changes that each individual has to make. We have to assess our life, distinguish between our needs and our wants, and learn new knowledge and skills to address this new situation. Most important of all, we have to change our mindset to address this new global scenario. To face these challenges, Malaysian consumers have to take greater personal responsibility of their lives.

We have to learn to better manage our spending, plan our finances and often give up old our beliefs and prejudices that are obstacles to making these changes. In essence, the Malaysian consumer has to move towards more mindful consumption.

The National Consumer Campaign endeavors to empower consumers to make these changes.

The theme of the Campaign is **“Change Begins With Me”**



The Context

National Consumer Campaign 2008 - 2012

2008 had been a particularly difficult year for the Malaysian consumers. Many changes in the international global arena have directly impacted on the quality of life of the Malaysian consumer, making it more difficult for him to make ends meet.

Food prices have gone up. The Economist called the food crises, the “silent tsunami”.

- Price of rice had increased by 141% and wheat by 120%.
- 37 countries were facing food shortages.

If the price of food continues to rise, studies indicate that more than 100 million people could be forced into absolute poverty.

Oil prices have become extremely volatile.

- With the increase of the price of fuel, transportation costs, fertilizer costs and almost every other household purchases have gone up; from roti chanai to your favorite coffee.

We depend on oil for 90% of our transport, and for food, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and the entire bedrock of modern living. Oil industry experts estimate that current reserves will only last for about 40 years.

We are facing climate changes which are beginning to affect our lives in significant ways. Some of the consequences of these changes include:

- higher average global temperatures,
- unpredictable weather,
- rising sea levels, and
- runaway heating.

Water scarcity: A looming crises. The number of people is growing fast and our water use is growing even faster.

- A third of the world's population lives in water-stressed countries.
- In 1990, over one billion people in the world did not have the minimum water needed for household use.

The financial crisis has again hit the world.

- Jobs are being lost.
- No new jobs are being created.
- Stocks, investments, and credit are down.

What does all this mean to the Malaysian consumer? It means that prices of almost everything is going up while salaries are not increasing; and it also it means jobs may be lost causing unemployment. It means a decreasing quality of life, maybe more debts and bankruptcies. It means more broken families and families in stress. Often, it also means more crime and feelings of insecurity in the community.

Overall, it means we are living in an uncertain and unpredictable world. Governments of today have very limited means to influence what happens to you. It really is up to you.

Being a Mindful Consumer

Mindfulness is a state of mind in which people become aware of their thoughts and actions and are fully occupied with the present moment. To be mindful is to be fully engaged in the here and now.

As a mindful consumer, we are present in our minds and directly engaged in our daily tasks of financial management and consumption. These tasks are filled with purpose and guided by specific value-based principles that will take us away from wastefulness and destructiveness of the environment and towards financial responsibility and sustainable consumption.

The first step in becoming a mindful consumer is to establish these principles.

- A mindful consumer is conscious of his income and his expenditure
- A mindful consumer is aware of his needs and wants
- A mindful consumer is concerned for both his present as well as his future needs
- A mindful consumer substantially spends based on his needs
- A mindful consumer adapts actions that can lead to sustainable consumption
- A mindful consumer respects all life and natural processes
- A mindful consumer seeks his identity not by what he possesses

To reduce the clutter in our minds, we need to understand how the environment, especially the media, affects our values and attitudes. Those values and attitudes affect our behaviour, including our spending and buying habits. By being aware and understanding the affects of the media, we will be more critical of those values, especially those that result in wasteful behaviour. Through critical thinking, we can learn to challenge our beliefs and learn new behaviours to enhance our personal well-being, as well as reduce our ecological footprint.

Mindful consumption includes:

- Planning one's purchases
- Budgeting and sticking to one's budget
- Using public transport
- Eating more fruits and vegetables instead of processed foods
- Switching to generic brands
- Reducing luxuries and impulse buying
- Optimising water and energy use
- Growing one's own vegetables





Sustainability in consumption

... is an attempt to provide the best outcomes for human and natural environments, for both now and the indefinite future. It relates to the connection of economic, social, institutional and environmental aspects of human society, as well as the non-human environment. It is intended to be a means of balancing civilisation and human activity so that society, its members and its economies are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential today, while preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and planning and acting for the ability to maintain these ideals in a very long term. Sustainability affects every level of organisation, from the local family to the entire planet. **We must all strive to live a sustainable lifestyle.**

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." - *von Goethe*

Sustainable Development is ... "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs..." - *from the World Commission On Environment and Development's report, Our Common Future*

Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children" - *Anonymous*

Climate change will not be effectively managed until individuals and communities recognise that their behaviour can make a difference - *The Royal Society, Climate Change: what we know and what we need to know.*

Sustainable development is a process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways which protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems - *Sarah Parkin, Forum for the Future*

When are we going to stop defining ourselves by how much stuff we consume?

We are living as if we had three planets' worth of resources to live with rather than just one. We need to cut by about two-thirds our ecological footprint. - *David Miliband*

Do we have to wait until a disaster overwhelms us before we make the radical changes necessary to protect our world for future generations? That is the vital challenge of sustainable development. If we act now there is much that can be saved which will otherwise disappear forever - *John Gummer*

Unless we change direction, we are likely to end up where we are going - *Chinese proverb*



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