

I was enjoying a FIFA world cup football match between Brazil and Costa Rica. In the break time an advertisement diverted my attention to a completely different topic. It was about Sustainable Singapore campaign, run by the National Environmental Agency. I felt proud to know that our little red dot is committed to contribute to a global cause by reducing our total carbon emissions. Thoughts started clouding in my mind.

In recent decades, many countries around the world are facing severe impact of climate change and experiencing extreme weather conditions like terrible floods, droughts, melting of arctic glaciers and rising sea levels. 2016 was the warmest year as recorded. News of burning bats and extinguishing of many other species of Flora and fauna are shaking us.

Singapore has limited land and resources. Rise in daily temperature or more wet months will cause rise in sea levels by the end of this century and may endanger our existence. Keeping this in mind, we have to play our role to fight climate change. It is a duty of every resident of Singapore to support our nation's pledge to reduce carbon emissions. There could not be a better way to encourage participation of individuals, communities and businesses than setting targets to reduce our carbon footprints. Many thoughts started racing in my mind about how we can contribute towards developing a sustainable Singapore.

In **individual** contribution to reduce the carbon footprints, behavioral changes will definitely be the key. Start the day taking simple steps for 'conserving water and electricity'. Minimize the use of water and electricity by purchasing water and energy efficient appliances. Purchase items with Energy Star label or Green Label products to conserve energy by 25-80%. Turn off lights and electrical appliances when not in use. Setting the air-conditioner temperature at 25°C, sealing all air leaks will reduce the heating and cooling energy consumption. Proper servicing of appliances to improve the performance by lowering energy consumption. Weatherize your home to make it more energy efficient. Monitor and compare electricity bills. Use washing machine with full loads. Only purchase things you need. Promote use of second hand items. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle of household items, clothing, newspapers, bottles, cardboard, plastic, metal cans or old electronic appliances. Recycle e-waste at designated e-waste recycling bins. Say 'No' to plastic. Increase use of reusable shopping bags. Use own reusable containers for hawker food. Use Local Food to reduce packaging and transportation. Minimize use of red meat and dairy products as animals like cows produce greenhouse gases. Prefer walking, cycling for small distances, share and promote use of electrical vehicles.

The **Community** can also play an important part in reducing carbon footprints by conducting Reduce-Reuse-Recycle campaigns like community recycling. Promote 'Repair Kopitiam' projects to combat buy and throw away culture. This will bring the community together to repair and reuse. Set up and encourage public to use e-waste recycling corners, paperless offices. Reduce use of plastic-Styrofoam disposables for community functions. Schedule community gatherings, eco-friendly trips, walks at Green buildings like Our Tampines Hub. Promote community gardening and tree plantation activities to offset carbon footprints.

Singapore is an economic hub of South-East Asia. **Businesses** must play very important role in sustainability of Singapore by taking right steps to reduce carbon emission and fight climate change. Businesses should decide their percentage target to reduce carbon footprint, according start planning and adopting environment friendly policies. Organize trainings and activities to promote the cause. Use green energies. Start measuring and monitoring organization's carbon footprints. Go for 'Green Buildings' with natural lights and ventilation architecture. Upgrade water-energy efficient systems and equipment to cut down energy requirements. Encourage paperless offices and digital communications. Wherever possible, work from home is another good option to minimize daily travel of employees. Prefer videoconferences over personal business trips. Educate and encourage the staff for 3R. Promoting compulsory activities like Tree plantation will help in offsetting the carbon footprints.

Last but not least the Singapore **Government** has to play the leading role in reducing our carbon footprints as pledged. Year 2018 has been declared as year of climate action. For reducing carbon footprints government will be introducing Carbon Tax from 2019 mainly for the large polluters. Even for green energy, the government has planned for floating solar panels. It is also encouraging electric car sharing programs and installation of large number of electrical recharge points. Efforts for efficient public transport network and decent bicycle – walking trails will help in reducing the number of private vehicles.

Moreover, government need to organize more awareness programs to fight climate change, promoting recycling-reuse culture in Singapore. Taking some steps like increasing e-waste collection centers, promoting 'Repair Kopitam' projects, promoting sell of recycled items at lower prices, conducting more repair- reuse-recycle courses in schools, running awareness programs for waste collecting agencies, Karang guni persons, etc. Banning some plastic items or reducing plastic usage, promoting sellers- supermarkets to give discounts on use of reusable bags, containers, tax hike for more packaging. Promoting local products and food. Credit program for businesses using paperless offices, Green buildings, digital currencies, e-communications, green energies, water and energy efficient systems, waste management system, public awareness program.

For reduction in the use of fossil fuels Government can promote use of green energy, lowering prices of cycles, limited speed e-scooter, e-cars, solar panels, solar appliances. Applying higher taxes for vehicles using fossil fuels, businesses using petroleum products. Rebates for those managing lower energy consumptions. Installation of more solar panels on rooftops of HDB housings, streetlights and public places. Welcoming businesses generating clean energy, incentives for more use of public transport, credit points for students and businesses to engage in awareness and tree plantation activities may also help.

When my mind came back to the football ground, my favorite team Brazil had already won the match. Now, it is time for us to play our best to win against carbon footprints. I scored the first goal for our nation by switching off the T.V. and lights of my drawing room before going to bed.