

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey 2023 by ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute highlights declining views of climate change as a threat, calls for energy transition and regional food security concerns.**

**Singapore, 21 September 2023** – In June and July 2023, the world experienced record high temperatures during these months in 174 years. Southeast Asia was not spared, with heatwaves across the region in the first part of the year. Against this background, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute undertook its fourth annual survey on Southeast Asians' attitudes and perceptions towards climate change issues and shared the findings during the report launch this morning.

The most surprising finding of this year's survey is that even though Southeast Asians experienced major floods, heatwaves and droughts this year and recognised climate change as the predominant cause, there is a marked decline in the perception of threat urgency, with only 49% perceiving climate change as "a serious and immediate threat to the wellbeing of [their] country" compared to 69% in 2021.

As the momentum towards a low-carbon transition gathers, the region's perceptions towards issues such as moving away from fuel subsidies, national carbon taxes, and coal phaseouts continue to evolve. More than 50% of respondents believes that fossil fuel subsidies should be cut while over 30% are unsure about it. Majority of respondents (68.7%) support a national carbon tax and two-thirds support the phase-out of coal consumption immediately or by 2030. Perceptions on food security show that 14% of Southeast Asians experience food security either all the time or frequently, and the cause is perceived to be due to price inflation and climate change. Seven in ten Southeast Asians expressed considerable concern about food availability and affordability due to climate impacts in the next three years.

Notably, the highest attribution of responsibility for climate action is on national governments. However, national governments are seen to be lagging behind civil society in tackling climate change. 72.2% of respondents saw the development of regional energy infrastructure as a priority.

On the international front, while Japan is seen as the leader in providing climate expertise by 23.7% of respondents ahead of the EU (17.8%), China (17.5%) and the US (14.1%), the region placed a premium on neighbourly cooperation from other ASEAN countries for providing much-needed support towards climate resilient agriculture (33.5%). In terms of potential regional leadership in climate actions, Singapore is considered as having the most potential (38.7%), followed by Indonesia (12.2%).

Commenting on the significance of the survey, ***His Excellency Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad from Malaysia's Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change*** shared "The "Southeast Asia Climate Outlook 2023 Survey Report", now in its fourth year is particularly useful for governments to assess how we are performing in the race against climate devastation in the eyes of our stakeholders. The findings showed us that we have the support to go beyond the rhetoric and step up on our plans to address climate change."

Commenting on the survey, ***Mr Choi Shing Kwok, Director and CEO of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute*** said: "The data we collected over the last 4 years through the survey has become a priceless resource for media, regional organisations and researchers hoping to gain a better understanding of public attitudes and perceptions of climate issues in the context of the unique circumstances we face in this part of the world. These findings serve as a motivation and guide for policy makers and other stakeholders in Southeast Asia as we all race against time to achieve the global climate goals."

The Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey 2023 was conducted between 11 July and 6 August 2023 drawing a total of 2,225 responses from citizens of all ten ASEAN states, exceeding last year's 1,386 responses. Besides English, the survey was offered in six different Southeast Asian languages (Bahasa Indonesia, Burmese, Lao, Khmer, Thai and Vietnamese), both online and in-person.

The full survey results were discussed at a hybrid webinar on 21 September 2022. ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute will continue to track the views of Southeast Asians as climate change issues develop in the coming years.

For more information on the last three annual Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey, visit <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/category/articles-commentaries/southeast-asia-climate-outlook/>

**Media Contact**

Teo Hwee Leng (Ms)

[teo\\_hwee\\_leng@iseas.edu.sg](mailto:teo_hwee_leng@iseas.edu.sg)

Assistant Director, Corporate Communications

ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

**About ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute (ISEAS)**

ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute (formerly Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security, and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. The Institute's key research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies, and Regional Social and Cultural Studies.

The Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme (CCSEAP) was established in 2020 to examine the phenomenon of climate change, its impact, and policy responses across the region and in key Southeast Asian countries and to advance climate discourse and knowledge in Southeast Asia.