

14 February 2025

For Immediate Release

The First S R Nathan Fellowship Young Leaders Seminar

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) is pleased to announce the launch of the S R Nathan Fellowship Young Leaders Seminar Series. The first seminar will be held on 24 February 2025, at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Titled “**Shaping Singapore's Climate Future: Achieving NDCs with the Use of Carbon Markets**,” the seminar will focus on the crucial role of carbon markets in addressing climate change in Singapore.

The keynote will be delivered by **Melissa Low**, Research Fellow at NUS’s Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions, who will present her research on transparency and accountability in carbon markets, offering insights into how policy frameworks can drive meaningful change.

Singapore, as part of its revised 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted to the United Nations on 10 February 2025, has committed to reduce emissions to between 45 to 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2035, after peaking emissions between 2025 and 2028. This is the first time the nation has announced a downward emissions trajectory, emissions trajectory contributes towards achieving the long-term temperature objective of the Paris Agreement.

Given that Singapore is a resource-constrained, alternative energy-disadvantaged city-state, international cooperation is vital in helping Singapore make up the residual emissions reduction required to achieve its climate ambitions. One avenue is through international carbon markets, aligned with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Ms Low’s keynote will delve into how bilateral cooperation with other countries can help unlock additional green growth opportunities for carbon services and trading, while also highlighting how research can address challenges such as ensuring environmental integrity and avoiding double counting.

The discussion will subsequently expand to explore wider climate change policies and practical solutions for a more sustainable future, specifically in the context of Singapore’s Climate Goals and regional environmental challenges.

After which, there will be a panel discussion on the carbon market and a more general discussion on climate change, moderated by **Kong Man Jing** (Biogirl MJ), co-founder of Just Keep Thinking, an Instagram page on science, biodiversity and sustainability.

Rueban Manokara, Global Lead, Carbon Finance and Markets Taskforce at the World Wide Fund for Nature – International (WWF), will start off the discussion. He served in the National Climate Change Secretariat in the Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office, Singapore as Singapore's lead negotiator for Article 6 at the UNFCCC and coordinated the development of Singapore's carbon market policy.

Ho Xiang Tian, co-founder of LepakInSG, an informal environmental group, will talk about other climate adaptation efforts such as infrastructure and nature-based solutions. He is also

a Research Assistant for Cooling Singapore 2.0, under the climate and vegetation pillar in the Sustainable Urban Living In Tropical & Extreme Environments (SULTREE) Lab at the Singapore Management University.

The panel will also discuss how youth leadership in environmental sustainability can shape Singapore's future by driving grassroots initiatives, raising public awareness, and influencing policy decisions towards a more resilient and sustainable nation.

A biographical note on the panellists is provided herewith.

About the S R Nathan Fellowship Young Leaders Seminar Series

The S R Nathan Fellowship Young Leaders Seminar Series complements the work of the S R Nathan Fellowship by inviting young academics and opinion leaders to present their research or new ideas, advancing public understanding and fostering discussion of issues of critical national interest.

About the S R Nathan Fellowship for the Study of Singapore

The S R Nathan Fellowship was announced in 2013 at IPS' 25th anniversary gala dinner. IPS wanted to recognise the unique contributions of Mr S R Nathan — Singapore's sixth and longest-serving President — to public service and the development of Singapore. With generous support from individual and corporate donors, the Institute raised around S\$5.9 million (including a matching government grant) to endow the fellowship.

The S R Nathan Fellowship for the Study of Singapore serves to further IPS' core mission: to research and analyse policy issues and challenges, build bridges between key thought leaders, and communicate the Institute's work to a wider audience.

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Melissa Low

Ms Melissa LOW is Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Centre for Nature-based Climate Solutions (CNCS). At the Centre, Melissa leads Continuing Education and Training. Under her stewardship, its sustainability-related programmes have benefited close to 500 government officers and private sector individuals. She previously worked at the Energy Studies Institute, NUS where she carried out research projects on a range of energy and climate issues of concern to Singapore and the region. She has participated in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) for over a decade and is an active sustainability thought leader, authoring, publishing and presenting at various forums.

She is the Designated Contact Point for NUS's accreditation to the UNFCCC, and currently serves as interim co-focal point on the Steering Committee of the Research and Independent Non-Governmental Organisation Constituency under the UNFCCC. Melissa holds an LLM in Climate Change Law and Policy (with distinction) from the University of Strathclyde, MSc in Environmental Management and BSocSci (Hons) in Geography from NUS. For her Master's thesis on past and contemporary proposals on equity and differentiation in shaping the 2015 climate agreement, Melissa was awarded the Shell Best Dissertation Award 2013. She is currently pursuing a PhD focused on transparency and accountability of the carbon markets at the NUS Department of Geography.

In 2021, Melissa was conferred the NEA EcoFriend Award and the Public Service Medal (Pingat Bakti Masyarakat) for her contributions towards environmental sustainability, climate change awareness and impact on youth. She serves as Chair of the Climate Action SG Alliance and Advisor to the #GreenHacks Youth Panel. In April 2024, she was appointed to the Ministry of Education Headquarters (MOE HQ) Syllabus Development Committee for Lower Secondary Geography. In March 2023, Melissa was appointed to the Paris Agreement's Article 6.4 mechanism Roster of experts as "Climate Policy Expert" for two years. Melissa is a member of the Editorial Board of Sustainable Earth Reviews.

From 2021 to 2024, Melissa served as Council Member of the 16th and 17th National Youth Council and Advisory Committee Member for the MSE SG Eco Fund. She was formerly Chief Curator of the National Youth Council's Young ChangeMakers Programme; committee member of the Speak Good English Movement; panellist on the Speak Good English Movement Programmes Evaluation Panel; and a member of the International Civil Aviation Organisation's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection Long Term Aspirational Goal Task Group.

Outside of work, Melissa started an eco-friendly social book swap movement in Singapore, called Books and Beer, which has been featured in The Straits Times, The Business Times, Bangkok Post and The Wall Street Journal's "Scene Asia Blog".



Kong Man Jing

Ms KONG Man Jing (MJ) is the co-founder of the Just Keep Thinking educational media company where it merges education and entertainment to produce engaging content across various social media platforms. With a global audience exceeding 600,000 followers, MJ's work includes a wide range of content, from videos and wildlife documentaries to award-winning comic books and sustainability learning journeys.

With a background in environmental biology, working experiences in nature organisations and as a science educator for three years, MJ is committed to communicating biodiversity and sustainability issues and increasing access to environmental education to the public. Beyond her online presence, MJ actively engages in physical programmes such as nature-guided tours, workshops and talks. Eager to empower youth and contribute back to the community, she serves as a co-leader of a government-backed youth panel initiative focused on amplifying youth voices in shaping national policies, and also co-leads the youth delegation team in this year's COP29 climate conference.



Rueban Manokara

Mr Rueban MANOKARA is Global Lead of the Carbon Finance and Markets Taskforce, WWF. He oversees the policy development and implementation efforts related to carbon finance within WWF's networks. Rueban also serves as a member of the Technical Advisory Body of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, the carbon reduction programme administered by the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation. Rueban previously served in the National Climate Change Secretariat in the Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office, Singapore, as Singapore's lead negotiator for Article 6 at the UNFCCC and coordinated the development of Singapore's carbon market policy. Rueban has a Master in Law from the University of Oxford.



Ho Xiang Tian

Mr HO Xiang Tian is the co-founder of environmental group LepakInSG and has spent more than nine years working on waste, nature and climate issues in Singapore. He graduated from the Singapore Institute of Technology with a Master's in Sustainable Infrastructure Engineering (Land) and is currently working at the Sultree lab in the Singapore Management University.

About the Institute of Policy Studies

The [Institute of Policy Studies \(IPS\)](#) was established in 1988 as an independent think-tank to study and generate public policy ideas in Singapore. Today, IPS is an autonomous research centre of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. The Institute continues to advance its core mission: to analyse public policy; build bridges between thought leaders; and communicate research findings to a wide audience. IPS examines domestic policy challenges across a variety of fields and studies the attitudes of Singaporeans through surveys of public perception. It adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in its analysis and takes the long-term view in its strategic deliberation and research.

For media queries

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