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Mohamed: National Disaster Fund still short of target

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - A month after its inception, the National Disaster Fund, set up to alleviate the Government's financial burden in tackling the haze problem, has yet to reach its target.

"A total of RM1,599,870 has been received," National Disaster Management and Relief Committee chairman Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said today.

The most recent contributor to the fund was the South Korea Government with a contribution of US\$50,000 (RM155,000).

Set up on Sept 19, the fund was created to enable the Government to provide firemen with the equipment to carry out their tasks in Kalimantan and Sumatra; fund a research programme to study the long-term effects of the haze on the people and finance treatment for those from the lower income group suffering from effects of the haze.

Initially, the Government had hoped that Malaysian companies with economic interests in Indonesia would come forward to contribute.

To this end, a personal appeal letter from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was given to representatives of these companies.

However, to date only three have come forward and contributed to the fund.

They are Tabung Haji, Golden Hope Plantations Bhd and Perlis Plantation Bhd which contributed RM100,000 each.

Surprisingly those with no economic interests in Indonesia have also contributed to the fund.

Kualiti Alam Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Renong Bhd, which manages the country's first integrated scheduled waste management plant, contributed RM500,000 while the Umno Kayu Ara Pasong branch in Pontian, Johor, contributed RM1,300.

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