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Cabinet adopts several anti-haze measures

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Cabinet today decided on several immediate measures to tackle local sources of air pollution, such as forest fires and open burning, to prevent a recurrence of the haze.

It has drawn up a programme which, among others, calls for building up the country's fire-fighting capability and for district authorities to act immediately on open burning.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today the Government was concerned about the local sources of pollution and felt the country should do its best to prevent the haze.

Due to the urgency of the matter, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had even suggested that the Royal Malaysian Air Force sell off several of its helicopters to buy special fire-fighting aircraft.

"The air force may have several helicopters which are not frequently used and which can be sold. The money can be used to buy aircraft from Russia.

"The Government is very serious in trying to prevent the haze. Sacrifices will have to be made," Law told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet felt the country should look to private firms or overseas for training and acquiring equipment to upgrade the fire-fighting capability.

Law said the Government could borrow or rent fire-fighting equipment.

The National Security Division will be the lead agency in implementing the programme.

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