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State Govt to take up EIA's recommendations

SELANGOR Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar said the State Government will take up recommendations from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report to formulate catchment management plan for the Sungai Selangor Third Phase (SSF3) water supply project.

He said the catchment management plan will take into consideration landuse development control, erosion and control measures; reservoir operational regime and security; comprehensive river basin management system for water quality monitoring; and other matters which will directly and indirectly be caused by the construction of the dam.

"All these are to be implemented with close coordination and supervision with relevant agencies such as the departments of forestry, wildlife and national parks, environment, agriculture, town and country planning, fisheries, and drainage and irrigation.

"We will also definitely take care of the welfare of the orang Asli and give them a better and modern livelihood than they are having now," Abu Hassan said in his keynote address at the opening of National Water Conference in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

Also present were Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (Asli) president Mirzan Mahathir and Sungeiway Group president Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah. More than 50 participants from local and foreign companies as well as senior officials from public sector attend the two-day conference, organised by Asli.

The feedback from the conference will be submitted to the state and federal governments as well as to the national Water Council as input to their water supply management.

Abu Hassan said it has been projected that there will be a critical water shortage in Selangor and Federal Territory by the year 2003 as demand of 3,151 million litre per day (mld) will outstripped supply of 3,028 mld.

The State Government, he said has decided that the SSF3 dam project is the best viable option to cope with the increasing water demand.

According to him, a thorough study of the viability of the SSF3 has been done and every aspect of the consequences and impact on the environment and the people has been carefully reviewed and studied.

Abu Hassan also said that the process taken to improve water quality and quantity while at the same time not neglecting the ecosystem is very long and requires an integrated effort from all quarters including the private sector.

He said the private sector plays a prominent role together with the State Governments and National Water Council in the water supply management and conservation as this sector is increasingly depending on treating and supplying water.

He said there are other issues which needed to be tackled in the development of water supply such as to reduce the 40 per cent non-revenue water, assessment of landuse, a comprehensive river basin management, zoning of industries and relocation of squatter settlement along river banks.

Others include establishing buffer zones along river reserves, forest catchment protection and tapping alternative sources of water supply such as groundwater.

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