



Cabinet yet to approve GM mosquito trial
Malaysiakini.com
October 11, 2010

Expressing disappointment over the "low" public cooperation in the fight against dengue fever, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said today the government would continue to identify creative and innovative methods to eradicate the mosquito-borne disease.

"... if you ask people to be responsible for their own particular area ... to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes ... it doesn't seem to be working," he said.

Najib said the government efforts were necessary because cooperation from the public to check the spread of dengue fever was considered low.

"Dengue is a serious problem, so we have to tackle it. We have to find creative and very innovative ways (to eradicate dengue fever)," he told reporters after officiating at the 61st session of the World Health Organisation (WHO) regional committee for the Western Pacific in Putrajaya.

Also present was Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai.

Najib said the release of genetically-modified *Aedes* mosquitoes, carrier of the dengue virus, for field testing was one of the methods of the government to check the spread of the disease.

IMR to release in Bentong and Alor Gajah

However, he said, the decision would need cabinet approval.

The prime minister said people would be sceptical about anything new, "but once it's proven, then it becomes mainstream medicine".



The National Biosafety Board has assessed the field experiment proposal from the Institute of Medical Research to release the mosquitoes in Bentong, Pahang, and Alor Gajah, Melaka, in early October.

When the male *Aedes Aegypti* are genetically-modified and mated with the female *Aedes* mosquitoes in the environment, it is hoped that the killer genes will cause the larvae to die.

(The *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito transmits dengue fever, Chikungunya and yellow fever.)

Earlier, in his speech, Najib said the Malaysian health care system would be transformed into a more efficient and effective one in ensuring universal access to health care.

He said the blueprint was currently being worked out to develop "1Care for 1Malaysia".

"It's a restructured health system that is responsive in meeting the health care needs of the population, providing choices of quality health care and ensuring universal coverage based on solidarity and equity," he said.

- Bernama

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/144998>