

'Focus on climate change'

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PM wants action to avoid increased property damage and loss of life

KUALA LUMPUR: The country needs to pay serious attention to the impact of rising global temperatures, which will result in more intense dry seasons and increased floods, says Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

The Prime Minister said the matter was emphasised at the Third Meeting of the National Water Council (MAN) 2021 which he chaired virtually.

It was attended by Federal ministers, chief ministers and mentris besar, chief secretary to the government, Treasury secretary-general, as well as heads of the relevant departments and agencies, Bernama reported.

According to Ismail Sabri, the meeting recommended that action that impacts climate change should be implemented immediately during development planning to avoid

further property damage and loss of life.

He said the meeting also emphasised the water sector transformation agenda, carried out under the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) to 15MP, that would make the water sector an economic enabler and a generator of dynamic growth by 2040.

"Close cooperation between the Federal and the state governments is very important to ensure the success of the transformation agenda," he said in a statement yesterday.

Ismail Sabri said after realising that the rapid urbanisation process had caused frequent floods, MAN agreed to a proposal to gazette government land reserves to maintain the function of flood retention ponds and river reserves, ensure the quality of water resources and conserve the environment.

"Disruption to these facilities or components will affect the entire flood mitigation system, which includes the main components – rivers and retention ponds," he added.

Apart from that, he said MAN also agreed that action and adaptation of coastal protection for the short, medium and long term through nature-based solutions should take into account climate change factors and rising sea levels.

"This is to ensure the level of coastal protection is able to deal with extreme disasters to reduce the impact of disasters and ensure socio-economic sustainability and national development," said Ismail Sabri.

According to the Prime Minister, MAN also agreed to collaborate in the implementation of recycled water between Indah Water

Konsortium Sdn Bhd and state water operators to optimise water resources and contribute towards environmental sustainability through the concept of circular economy to manage the country's water resources.

Ismail Sabri said the provision of new water sources for use in non-food industries was one of the government's strategies as a measure to rehabilitate and conserve water resources as well as to provide an additional source of income for water operators.

He added that MAN also took note of two notification papers, namely the division of responsibilities between the Irrigation and Drainage Department; local authorities and other agencies on drainage systems, and monitoring and production of groundwater resources.