

**Table climate change motion at Asean meet, Putrajaya told –
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Environmental researchers want Malaysia to table a motion for a joint study among Asean countries on the global climate change and its impact on the region's socio-economy during the Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur later this year.

The study is aimed at creating a platform of cooperation for Asean scientists in the study of climate change, including the prolonged drought season and unusual rain over the last few years.

Professor Dr Fredolin T. Tangang, of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Climatology and Oceanography, said extreme weather conditions such as flood and drought were on the rise in the region.

"As Malaysia is the Asean chair, this is the right time for our experts to take the lead and collaborate with scientists in the region to study climate changes in the region," he told Bernama in a recent interview.

He said a detailed study allowed scientists to predict weather changes in the region and take active steps to ensure the region was always ready to face disasters, besides reducing the number of deaths and property loss.

Tangang, who is also vice-chairman of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), said the study would also help Asean plan for development and industries that could reduce the long-term negative impacts on the environment.

The IPCC report on extreme weather published in 2012 showed there was an increase in the number of cases involving global extreme weather and that the number would surely rise if countries failed to reduce the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, he said.

But he said the climate models used by the IPCC were of a large scale and it was not suitable for regional, national or local usage.

"A regional climate change research is not an easy task because there is no institution in Southeast Asia capable of doing so, and the lack of facilities such as super-computer equipment needed to create a regional climate simulation based on climate change data in the Asean countries.

"However, if Asean countries worked as a team in simulating climate in this region, it can be done," he said.

Professor Datuk Dr Azizan Abu Samah, Universiti Malaya's senior lecturer in its Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, also agreed that Malaysia should discuss the topic of climate change in the Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur this year.

He said Asean leaders would surely want to discuss the matter as their countries also underwent extreme climate changes, like the Philippines which suffered not one, but two or three hurricanes in a single year.

"Thailand was battered with the worst floods ever, and last year, Vietnam suffered a prolonged drought. These are all extreme weather conditions caused by climate change."

Azizan said among the things that could be discussed in the studies was how to address the impact of extreme weather and "climate variability".

Climate changes in Asean countries had a fairly strong co-relation with the regional weather to transform it into extreme weather, he said. – Bernama, March 1, 2015.

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