

Responding To Disasters Is No Longer Sufficient - Muhyiddin

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SENDAI (Japan), March 14 (Bernama) -- ASEAN countries are at the crossroads of deepening their understanding of the changes in the world where responding to disasters is no longer sufficient as demands for building safer and resilient communities are becoming imperative.

In making the statement on behalf of the ASEAN Ministers in charge of Disaster Management, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said ASEAN was likewise responding to challenges in managing disasters that were facing the world today.

He said the region was home to about 625 million people where ASEAN was the major global hub of manufacturing and trade, and one of the fastest growing consumer markets in the world.

"ASEAN, however, is also one of the most at-risk region in the world and around 100 million people have been adversely affected by catastrophic events since year 2000.

"And every year during the period, ASEAN has incurred losses of a staggering US\$4.4 billion on average due to disasters. The increasing severity of disasters, as further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, intensify the vulnerabilities of the people of ASEAN, especially the poor and marginalised," he said.

The deputy prime minister said this when addressing the delegates at the 3rd United Nations World Conference On Disasters Risk Reduction here today.

Muhyiddin said to face these challenges and particularly to continue investing in resilience building and climate change adaptation in order to preserve the fruits of socio-economic development, ASEAN had resolved to consolidate the community by building up ASEAN's regional integration process towards a more cohesive, inclusive and resilient ASEAN community.

Meanwhile, he also said financing disaster losses for recovery and providing immediate liquidity in the aftermath of a disaster was also a priority of ASEAN.

"We are now going to implement the ASEAN Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance Programme as part of the risk financing and insurance road map of the region to leverage national and regional resources as well as the international insurance market," he said.

Muhyiddin said ASEAN would continue to stand committed to adopt and implement a concise, focused and action oriented stand-alone outcome document that articulates the cross-cutting nature of disaster risk reduction.

"...and the imperative to attain mutually reinforcing complementarities among disaster risk reduction, climate change and sustainable development," he said.

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