

Climate Change Will Affect Malaysia - Meteorological Department Director-General Bernama

Mar 22, 2015

By Salawaty Supardi

PUTRAJAYA, March 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia cannot escape being hit by extreme weather such as thunderstorms, hurricanes, cyclones and strong winds due to climate change and global warming, said Meteorological Department Director-General Datuk Che Gayah Ismail.

She said the situation was proven via eight cyclone occurrences in Malaysia last year, four times over land and four times at sea (known as waterspouts).

"Previously, cyclone occurrences were rare in Malaysia, but last year, it happened. The probability of cyclone recurrence cannot be predicted as Malaysia does not have the expertise on this," she told Bernama in conjunction with the World Meteorological Day 2015 celebration tomorrow.

Che Gayah said the Meteorological Department Malaysia (MetMalaysia) was in the process of bringing in experts from Japan to give training to its officers on the best method of predicting cyclones.

"Most probably, MetMalaysia will also be sending officers to the United States as the country has the highest number of experts, experience and state-of-the-art equipment," she said.

On the World Meteorological Day, Che Gayah said it is celebrated on March 23 every year and the theme chosen by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) this year (2015) is 'Climate Knowledge For Climate Action'.

She said the theme this year was very important to be accepted by all WMO members including Malaysia to develop national development plans, action and mitigation needed to overcome climate change in future.

"There is a possibility extreme weather conditions will occur regularly in future due to global warming, hence, it is important for all of us to have the knowledge to face this situation.

"Apart from that, research in agriculture should also be aligned with climate change, if no preparations are made from now, there will be problems in food supply," Che Gayah said.

She said Malaysia joined WMO on May 19, 1998, and since then Malaysia received many benefits especially in terms of capacity development with Kuala Lumpur now a WMO executive member, which also involves in decisions making.

The most important benefits gained by Malaysia as a MWO member is sharing of data and information such as weather forecasts with 191 MWO member countries, Che Gayah said.

"For example, Malaysia is a small country and we don't have weather satellites as other MWO member countries do, but, Malaysia as a MWO member will obtain data from satellite readings for free," she said.

Che Gayah said in conjunction with the World Meteorological Day tomorrow, MetMalaysia will launch 'myCuaca', a smartphone application which provide daily weather forecasts and weather warnings, information on earthquakes and tsunamis and also the latest satellite and radar images.

The application can be downloaded via Google Play and Apps Store for free, she said.

The purpose of launching the application by MetMalaysia is to improve its facilities, efficiency and transparency of the information delivery system and its services to the public through the mobile technology applications usage, Che Gayah said.

"MetMalaysia needs to make a paradigm shift to a new method based on innovation, creativity and high added value in order to remain relevant in competing at the global level," she said.

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