

## **France Hails Malaysia's Commitment on Climate Change**

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**By Nabilah Saleh**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- France has hailed Malaysia's assertion to retain 50 per cent of its forested area in line with an agreement reached by 195 nations in Paris last year as highly significant to the success of the accord's long-term goal.

French Ambassador to Malaysia Christophe Penot said the commitment, made at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21), was an extremely important commitment.

It would help to keep global temperature rise this century well below two degrees Celsius as agreed, he said in an interview with Bernama.

Penot said one of the key elements to reducing global warming was the need to "stop deforestation and start to reforest".

"Thus, this commitment by Malaysia would be very significant in the region. Also, in terms of the forest area, it's contributing very much to help reach the goal of reducing the 55 per cent (or even more) of total global greenhouse gas emissions," he said ahead of the the COP21 agreement signing ceremony.

The signing, which will take place at the United Nations today, marks an important international push to the agreement's timely entry into force.

Malaysia, with over 130 countries, has confirmed its participation at the signing, which would see the presence of some 60 world leaders, including French President Francois Hollande.

The agreement outlines, among others, crucial areas identified as essential for a landmark conclusion, namely mitigation, adaptation, support, loss and damage.

It will enter into force after 55 countries, which account for at least 55 per cent of global emissions, deposit their instruments of ratification.

Penot said that in pursuing efforts to achieve collective success and fight against climate change, all 195 nations, including Malaysia, must take stock of the many commitments made.

He said that a 'review mechanism' to monitor each country's national contributions for every five years beginning 2020 would be crucial to put the world on a path to meet the long-term temperature goal.

Such a mechanism introduced by the agreement could elevate the efficiency of each country's national plans in reaching the agreement's objective, he added.

"The level of ambition that was expressed in the national contributions in view of the Paris

Conference was high, but...not high enough.

"This mechanism is essential because it will gradually improve and enhance every country's plans and basis to reach the agreement," he said.

He stressed that transparency was also important.

"This is because we need to be able to monitor what participating countries are doing; transparency is also a good way to show compliance," he said.

Penot noted that the agreement's robust transparency would also provide flexibility and support that took into account the capacities of different countries.

It also includes reports on finance and support provided by developed countries, while developing countries would report on the finance and support needed and received.

When asked on the possibility of the COP21 agreement repeating the failure of the Kyoto Protocol framework, Penot said COP21 was chartered on a very clear cause, which was more towards implementation and commitment to reach a turning point in global action on climate change.

"In the past framework, many countries were missing. But this time, the level of the mission is much higher. It brings even stronger signals," the 61-year-old envoy said.

He was optimistic that the COP21, which he defined as an 'inclusive agreement', was a balanced agreement which would see constant negotiations, apart from demonstrating good cooperation between developed and developing nations.

The much-criticised Kyoto Protocol was a resolution, which was reached in a climate conference in Japan in 1997 and set particular targets for carbon emission.

It was never ratified by the United States while Canada and Russia withdrew from the agreement. China was not concerned about the issue at the time.

The ambassador said he hoped that awareness among world citizens would be gradually increased and developed, and added that the damaging impact of climate change was becoming clearer every year and this would have an impact on the future generation.

As such, it is the responsibility of every citizen to look after the health of this planet, Penot said, stressing that "our very great grandchildren have to live on this planet".

He also pointed out that the key for success was not the government. "The real change must come from the citizens."

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