

**Only Moderate Public Awareness on Early Evacuation before Disaster - Zahid
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KEMAMAN, Oct 23 (Bernama) -- Public awareness on early evacuation in the event of disasters, especially floods is still at a moderate level, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said the evaluation was made by taking into account a scale of between one to 10 and the community was still at level five.

"We need to increase that awareness among the registered and unregistered victims. On the government side, we have set up Nadma (National Disaster Management Agency) which is ready 100 per cent in facing any eventualities in the country.

"But we need public response so that if it (disaster) occurs, we do not want the people to be merely spectators when assistance is given," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after opening the National Preparedness Month 2016 at the Kemaman Waterfront, here today.

Also present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim; Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, who is also Kemaman Member of Parliament, and Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Karim.

Earlier in his speech, Ahmad Zahid said the Kemaman Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) not only managed to achieve the gold standard in facing the floods but is also recognised at the international level.

Based on records, the Kemaman Preparedness SOP is a programme under the Kemaman Smart Community initiative that won an award at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva last year.

He also praised the commitment of all parties involved, including non-governmental organizations and security personnel in always playing their role to reduce the risk of deaths and destruction.

"We want to make this preparedness a culture among the community. We must embrace that culture in our hearts and minds so that we are constantly alert and spread it to family members starting from now," he added.

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