

Meteorological service aims to reduce disaster risks

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Bandar Seri Begawan - The reduction of disaster risks is the main priority of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the National Meteorological and Hydrology Services.

The priority will continue to be so, especially since the world's "exposed" communities are working hard to upgrade its effectiveness in prevention and reduction of natural disaster effects.

Pehin Orang Kaya Hamzah Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Awg Hj Abdullah bin Begawan Mudim Dato Paduka Hj Bakar, Minister of Communications, said that last year alone, the world lost an estimated US\$108.5 billion due to natural disasters.

The number of exposed communities has increased in the past decade due to the increase in urbanisation and the movement of residents to more "frail" areas such as the coast, as well as low-lying and dry areas.

This issue becomes critical with the rise in frequency and intensity of extreme incidents that are predicted to happen as reported in the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The Collaboration of a Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) organised by the WMO will be launched this year to provide many benefits to national Meteorological Service worldwide.

Brunei Darussalam in many ways is protected from major natural disasters such as those which occur in neighbouring countries such as earthquakes, as well as tsunamis and flooding that cause the loss of thousands of lives and large amounts of property.

Yet, there have been incidents of extreme weather that hit the country which proved that the country is not exempted from natural disasters such as long periods of drought accompanied by haze and forest fires in 1997/98, strong winds in the Brunei-Muara District in July 23, 2007 as well as flash floods and landslides in 2009.

Data of rainfall measured by the Meteorological Observation Station of Brunei International Airport (1970-2011) shows that a rising frequency in heavy rains that carry the risk of flash floods.

Therefore, the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) has increased its infrastructure projects to upgrade monitoring capacity and early warnings of extreme weather with the provision of new systems, particularly the Doppler Surveillance Weather Radar (DSWR), System Wind Profiling and Echo Registering (SWIPER) and Low Level Wind Shear Alert System (LLWAS) at a total cost of B\$19.5 million.

Pehin Dato Seri Setia Awg Hj Abdullah has also been made to understand that the Meteorological Services still face a shortage of experts in fields such as radar and weather satellite, numerical weather prediction and climate modeling.

Therefore, he called on the department to double its efforts to upgrade its human resource capacity. He also hoped that the Meteorological Service will be more pro-active in exploring and developing meteorology science applications for the use of the various sectors such as transportation, management and disaster mitigation, agriculture and water resources and energy management.

--Courtesy of Borneo Bulletin

Source: [Bru Direct | 25 March 2012](#)

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