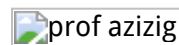


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English News

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USM – COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY TO MONITOR SHIFTS IN NATION'S WEATHER



PENANG, 24 August 2015 – The Centre for Global Sustainability Studies (CGSS) Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), in cooperation with Columbia University New York would continue to monitor and file reports on ongoing weather conditions to the authorities concerned in facing the possibility of another flood disaster in the country.

Director of the Centre for Global Sustainability Studies (CGSS) Professor Dr. Kamarulazizi Ibrahim said, his team has taken the initiative to monitor occurrences of natural disasters around the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region and anticipation of the possibilities for a disaster such as the one which occurred last year to be repeated in the country, befitting its role in providing guidance on issues concerning natural disasters and sustainability.

"We could monitor and look at the trend, in addition to the occurrences of wind movements, cyclones, as well as the prediction of weather patterns; however Allah S.W.T. (God Almighty) is still the deciding factor, and even now CGSS is monitoring the changing directions of the wind coming from Siberia heading to Kelantan and would continue to provide updates on the latest developments and possibilities in this coming September," said Kamarulazizi.

Kamarulazizi stressed that, the deluge in Kelantan which occurred last year was a rare phenomenon and where even the air and wind flow kept changing directions; other than the worsening floods due to the Northeasterly Monsoon winds which consistently blew, coming to this country across the South China Sea.

He said further, the shifts which are currently happening, with storms and cyclones occurring at different locations are all closely related to changes in the weather patterns and the resulting 'greenhouse' effect, from years of activities due to mankind's indifferent attitude and practices, worsening the conditions of the planet's greenery.

Meanwhile, Deputy Dean (Students Affairs and Network) School of Humanities USM, who is a lecturer in Geography, Professor Dr. Chan Ngai Weng also recognised the fact that the current weather changes were the results from man's activities, which have led to an onset of "artificial greenhouse effect".

Ngai Weng emphasised that, it was widely known that during the era of the Industrial Revolution beginning from the 1760s, the indiscriminate release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere had led to increased amounts in the planet's atmosphere yearly, which has led to pollution presently occurring at the global level and causing temperatures to increase, incidences of acid rain, and haze among others.

"This situation should make us realise that global weather warming which is happening now is no longer a natural event, more so it being affected and influenced by man and the artificial greenhouse effect, all of which are warning signs on temperature increases in the atmosphere and the planet's surface, involving a complex process of sunlight, gas and other minute pollutants in the atmosphere," he said further.

Commenting more, he stated that the natural greenhouse effect has occurred much longer, even before the existence of man, however man's current activities has worsened the effect, to the extent that now it has been referred to as an artificial greenhouse/anthropogenic effect.

"The greenhouse effect occurred as a result of the heat being trapped under the atmosphere due to the greenhouse gases, and with more heat being trapped (than released) under the atmosphere, the planet has become warmer," he explained.

Ngai Weng added, flood is one indicator of global warming, as when the temperature increases, ice at the North Pole would melt, leading to a rise in the ocean level, and when the ocean becomes warmer, the water would expand in volume, engulfing the shallow beachside areas.

"Increases have mostly resulted from man's activities, especially from the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas; fossil fuels contain carbon and burning them would produce carbon dioxide, a primary greenhouse gas. Prior to the industrial revolution, the amount of carbon dioxide released was around 280 ppm (parts per million) but in 2015, the amount is at 400 ppm. Additionally, many forests (trees and other types of vegetation) around the world, which absorb this gas through the process of photosynthesis have been destroyed," said the expert who has been involved in a number of researches around the world and who is locally an environmental activist especially in matters on water.

He further said, lands cleared and forests cut have also led to a rise in the amount of carbon dioxide.

"My advice is, as concerned citizens of the world, we should be worried about the global warming phenomenon which is becoming more critical, and a drastic move should be taken together to reduce the release of greenhouse gases for the benefit of future generations," he said at the end of the interview session.

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