

# Youths are stewards of the environment

Rasidah HAB  
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

Sunday, June 7, 2009

YOUTHS should take ownership of the stewardship or leadership role in environmental conservation and management, said the Minister of Development at the launching of World Environment Day at the Ministry of Development yesterday.

Brunei Darussalam Environment Youth Envoys (Brunei Eye) programme is one of the ways to develop youths as citizens who are environmentally literate, imbued with environmental ethic, willing and capable to play their part to preserve, conserve and utilise the environment in a sustainable manner for the benefits of present and future generations, said Pehin Orang Kaya Hamzah Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Hj Abdullah Begawan Mudim Dato Paduka Hj Bakar.

With 50 per cent of the nation's population made up of youth, Pehin Dato Hj Abdullah said it is pertinent that their development needs are served and addressed.

"As constituents of both the present and future generation, we must give youth the opportunity to be engaged as well as take ownership and stewardship roles to realise sustainable development goals," the Minister said.

He added that the Ministry recognised the important role of youths in nation building, therefore they will continue to engage and involve the younger generation in protecting and conserving the environment. "We need to engage and empower youths in our pursuit of development," he said. Brunei Eye programme is a youth leadership development programme directed at widening horizons and awareness on environmental protection and conservation.

Themed "Your Planet Needs You-Unite to Combat Climate Change", the programme was organised by the Ministry of Development through relevant departments such as Jastre, Department of Water Services in collaboration with Science, Technology and Environment Partnership (Step) centre under the Ministry of Education.

The collaboration has initiated national, bilateral and regional programme and activities to educate and promote environmental awareness amongst the youth.

Pehin Dato Hj Abdullah, at the ceremony, announced that the ministry will also be organising the second Asean +3 Youth Environment Forum in December this year.

He also called on youths to seize the opportunity to interact and network with their local and overseas peers at the forum.

The minister then toured the presentations prepared by ten secondary schools in Brunei-Muara District.

Each school presented their environment project which ranges from recycling, alternative source of energy, the green house effect and the importance of healthy and sustainable school environment.

Munirah Ajeerah Hj Arine, 14 from Saiyyidina Hassan Secondary School said their "3R Project : Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" started last year.

"Our school previously suffered serious cases of littering even in classes. Under the 3R project, each classroom is provided with boxes to store plastics, paper and cans. Once they are filled up, the trash is transferred to recycling bins," she said.

Munirah's schoolmate, Maryline Jawang, said even student prizes are given in reusable bags. "The money that we get from the sale of recycled items are used for a good cause," she said, adding that it financed their school's tree planting activities.

The Brunei Times