

Call for Waterfront to be more disabled friendly

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Prof Dr Asiah Abdul Rahim

KUCHING: Many tourists may give the Kuching Waterfront a favourable rating but a study has called for more features to be enhanced for people with special needs.

The study, conducted in 2008, pointed out that bollards and curb cuts built along the Waterfront made it difficult for the disadvantaged especially those in wheelchairs to move around.

It was also raised that no accessible parking had been provided for people with special needs.

In addition, the public toilets at Kuching Waterfront were built in such a way that they are unfriendly to the disadvantaged.

Sharing this with reporters here yesterday was International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) deputy dean of Postgraduate, Research and Consultancy Prof Dr Asiah Abdul Rahim, who said the study team, however, had noted some and looked forward to further improvement.

"The bollards and curb cuts seen at the Kuching Waterfront are not comfortable for the wheelchair bound. Moreover, the side parking there offers no convenience for the disadvantaged.

"There is no accessible parking and the traffic light there is not friendly to the disabled. It should allow more time for those in wheelchairs to cross the road," she said when met at a workshop titled 'Access audit for built environment' at the Sarawak Tourism Complex here.

Asiah added at least 60 seconds should be granted for pedestrians at the traffic light, pointing the current 15 to 20 seconds crossing time as inconsiderate.

On the public toilets at Kuching Waterfront, she said accessibility for wheelchair users was not noted.

"Kuching Waterfront was one of the 16 cases we studied in 2008. Some structures are old, built in the 70s and 80s but we are trying to provide input to see that they are more disabled friendly."

The two-day workshop is jointly organised by Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design (KAED) of IIUM, Malaysia Standards Department and Kuching City North Commission (DBKU).

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