

## Malaysia's environmental laws don't relate to climate change — Academician

KUALA LUMPUR: With climate change becoming a global emergency, nations all over the world are looking into numerous mitigation efforts starting from their own backyards, with the hope the collective efforts of nations will help save the world from catastrophic impacts of climate change.

The required changes including reducing greenhouse gases and environmental degradation can only be achieved through strict and comprehensive laws.

The speakers at a forum entitled 'The Impact of Climate Change & Anthropogenic Hazards on the Marine Environment in Malaysia', here, yesterday found that while Malaysia has the Environmental Quality Act (EQA) 1974 to protect the environment and the Renewable Energy Act 2011 that indirectly contributes towards reducing carbon emissions, the laws have no direct correlation with climate change.

Lecturer on Environmental Law at Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Assoc Prof Dr Maizatun Mustafa who was a panellist at the forum, pointed out that a clear-cut connection between the EQA and climate change targets was needed as they were interrelated. "Currently, the EQA covers

environment and environmental pollution but strategies of the law are not directly connected to climate change as there is no provision for climate change....the definition of environment under the EQA is not targeting climate change.

“The Renewable Energy Act too is not enough because renewable energy is only focusing on reducing fossil fuel, though it is also important,” she said, adding that the climate change phenomenon was also contributed by other sectors such as agriculture and fisheries.

Last year, it was reported that the Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry was in the process of drafting the new legislation to replace the Environmental Quality Act 1974.

Meanwhile, Social Research officer of the Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Dr Hayrol Azril Mohamed Shaffril said it was vital for society to adapt in response to climate change impacts.

“However, the adaptation depends on one’s reliance towards nature’s stability, with the more one relies on nature’s stability, the higher the adaptation.

“For an office worker, the adaptation maybe more towards health needs. However, for those like farmers or fishermen, of course they are relying much more on nature’s stability, so they have to adapt more. They may have to adapt by mastering new skills to help them be more financially independent when facing climate change,” he said.

The forum also discussed the action plan to overcome the impacts of climate change and anthropogenic activities on the marine environment in Malaysia, as well as the development of policies that could also affect society’s livelihoods and sustainability, including the fishing communities.

The other speakers were Penang Fishermen's Association chairman, Nazri Ahmad and Penang Forum committee member, Khoo Salma Nasution. — Bernama