

Climatic Hazards Programme

SEADPRI Forum 2019 @ ASM: Strengthening Ties

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Photo by SEADPRI-UKM

Participants of the SEADPRI Forum 2019 hosted by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia.

Since its inaugural debut a decade ago in 2009, the annual flagship SEADPRI Forum was held for the first time away from UKM Bangi, hosted by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM). The ASM is a statutory body under the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (MESTECC) Malaysia, and strives to be the “Thought Leader” in the national science, technology and innovation arena. The mandate of ASM is to address the needs of the nation by providing the best scientific advice and advocacy that is independent, credible, relevant and timely.

The topic of disaster risk reduction and climate change is central to ASM as reflected by establishment of the ASM Disaster Risk Reduction Research Alliance Committee (DRR Research Alliance) to support the scientific community in Malaysia in 2017. The alliance serves as a platform to bring together key researchers and other stakeholders who are working in silo to connect, communicate and collaborate on issues related to disasters and their drivers such as climate change. Under the aegis of National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), ASM and SEADPRI-UKM, the inaugural National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation for DRR was convened in 2017 for this purpose. The 2nd National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation for DRR, to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 14-15 October 2019, will further this aspiration. The hosting of the SEADPRI Forum 2019 @ ASM marks a culmination of the collaboration between ASM and SEADPRI-UKM in building disaster and climate resilience of the country.

The Forum on “IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C: Implications for Southeast Asia” held on 25 April 2019 (Thursday) at MATRADE -

Tower, Kuala Lumpur, was led by Prof. Mark Howden from the Australian National University and Vice Chair of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Prof. Howden commenced by presenting key findings of the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C. According to the report, humans have contributed approximately 1°C of global warming since pre-industrial times and the consequences are already apparent worldwide for people, nature and livelihoods. At the current rate, it is projected that warming would reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052. There are pathways to limit global warming to 1.5°C and this is much better for tropical Southeast Asia, which is projected to experience the largest impacts on economic growth. Compared to a warming of 2°C, limiting warming to 1.5°C is expected to contribute to less extreme weather where people live, including extreme heat and rainfall. By limiting warming to 1.5°C, global mean sea level rise will be around 10 cm lower in 2100 but may continue to rise for centuries but 10 million fewer people will be exposed to risk of rising seas. In addition to other projected impacts, it is expected that up to several hundred million fewer people will be exposed to climate related risk and susceptible to poverty by 2050.

There are many challenges ahead for Malaysia and the region. Climate change mitigation is critical and should be given adequate emphasis for limiting global warming to 1.5°C. In addition, the country should also prepare disaster resilience plans for the short-term and climate change adaptation plans to address long-term risks. In this context, the ASM DRR Research Alliance and SEADPRI-UKM have much to contribute, to ensure that the country is prepared for a 1.5°C world.