

Climatic Hazards Programme

U-INSPIRE Malaysia@UKM Celebrates Earth Day 2022

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Photo by SEADPRI-UKM

Celebration of Earth Day 2022 led by U-INSPIRE Malaysia@UKM with presence from other youth and young professionals' major group in Malaysia.

Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement which was initiated in 1970. Earth Day celebrations emerged from an environmental and educational revolution to save the planet. It was initially started to combine grassroots support and ground efforts by students, educators, and non-profit organizations with national level commitments, to ensure that students across the world benefit from high-quality education to develop into informed and engaged environmental stewards. In addressing the climate crisis these days, coupling climate and environmental literacy with strong civic education is indeed a way to combat our greatest threat: climate change. The aim for Earth Day 2022 is to reframe the conversation, accelerate action and to work collectively among the community - individuals, governments, NGOs and businesses - to do our part.

U-INSPIRE Malaysia@UKM, Southeast Asia Disaster Prevention Research Initiative (SEADPRI-UKM), and the Asian Network on Climate Science and Technology (ANCST) with support from UNICEF Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) successfully conducted a webinar celebration on 22 April 2022. The aim of this webinar was in line with the Earth Day 2022 global theme to enhance and promote climate literacy initiatives among youth and young professionals in Malaysia. It can be seen as an effort to nurture knowledge and better understanding of their potentials, roles, and opportunities to utilize their background in combating the real threat of climate change. During the webinar, our first speaker, Prof. Sharifah Zarina Syed Zakaria of SEADPRI-UKM set the stage for what it is like to be climate literate when she elaborated that one should be able to make informed and responsible decisions with regard to actions

that may affect climate. Besides focusing on youth and young professionals, a child's right should never be left out. Ms. Jasmin Irisha Jim Ilham of UNICEF Malaysia shared in her presentation, the UNICEF perspective on children's lives being threatened due to the impact of climate change, how it will affect their abilities and what UNICEF has been doing through inclusive measures in tackling the climate and environmental crisis, which risks undoing decades of progress fighting for children's basic rights.

The next speaker, Ms. Mastura M. Rashid from IMPACT Malaysia, in her presentation shared observations on environment and climate issues that are usually discussed in urban echo chambers, and found out that youth are more triggered by waste management, disasters and political issues, among others; and shared calls for action, for instance, like having more capacity building in the local language to local people, orang asal, and more investment to empower youth towards meaningful climate actions. Our last speaker, Ms. Alka Kaur from the Malaysian Youth Climate Action Pact concluded the webinar with her presentation on youth perspective on strengthening national climate narrative matters and what type of policies could help promote investment in climate literacy; how we hold governing institutions to enforce and enact climate-related policies; how we can amplify a multitude of diverse youth voice, among others.

About 35 participants were present in the webinar and joined the question-and-answer session, reflecting this webinar was a success. Effective youth participation is about creating opportunities for other young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing, and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes.