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PUBLICATION: EOG-ASIA.COM SECTION: LATEST HEADLINES

DATE: THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2015 PAGE NO.: 1 OF 1

CIRCULATION: ONLINE FREQUENCY: ONLINE

HEADLINE: MALAYSIA GEARS UP ITS COMMITMENT TOWARDS RENEWABLE ENERGY; ALLOCATES RM 8.48 BILLION



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Malaysia gears up its commitment towards renewable energy; allocates RM 8.48 billion

Posted on March 26, 2015



By Mohani Niza

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysia is ready to embark on new forms of energy such as biomass, hydro, biogas and solar in a series of projects amounting to RM 8.48 billion, a Malaysian minister said today.

Speaking at the Electric, Power and Renewable Energy Malaysia 2015 (or EPRE 2015) held in the capital city Kuala Lumpur, Dato' Seri Diraja Mahdzir Khalid who is the Deputy Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water said that Malaysia relied less on traditional forms of energy such as coal, crude oil and natural gas.

"Building up renewable energy and solar power capacity is one of the 13 areas of focus under the Malaysia's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP)," he told a press conference today.

"By 2020, this sector is expected to generate a gross national income of over RM 457 million with 1,906 jobs created," he said further.

Malaysia is a large consumer of electricity compared to other developing countries, but less than that of developed countries. From 2014 to 2018 alone the average growth of electricity demand is 3.31% while electricity consumption per capita stands at 3,412 kWh per annum. This is projected to increase to more than double by 2030 at 7,571 kWh per person.

The country is heavily reliant on natural gas and coal. Currently, 95% of the country's source of electricity generation comes from non-renewable resources, while 90% of the country's resource of coal is imported. This makes Malaysia vulnerable to price fluctuation and other external factors.

Among the projects lined up by the government are a 265MW hydropower project in Kuala Terengganu and a 372MW project in Ulu Jelai both of which are under construction.

Other projects include a biomass project in Jengkam, biogas projects in Johor and Perak and a mini-hydro project in Pahang.

Perhaps the most ambitious of all is the ASEAN Power Grid which will connect Kuala Lumpur to Johor once it's completed by 2020.

Furthermore, TNB Research Sdn Bhd (the arm of the biggest electricity supplier in Malaysia Tenaga Nasional Berhad) has been given a RM 1.51 million grant by the Malaysian Electricity Supply Industries Trust Account (AAIBE) to conduct R&D on renewable energy.

"These initiatives will develop a grid connected floating solar photovoltaic system pilot project," Dato' Seri Diraja Mahdzir Khalid said.

This is the 11th time the conference has been held. It was previously known as ASEAN Elenex. This year's event sees 450 exhibitors from over 35 countries.



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