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Malaysia sets target of 31% RE in 2025

Renewable energy programmes expected to generate at least 20,000 jobs and investment value of not less than RM12 b to economy

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia has set a target of 31% of renewable energy (RE) in installed capacity in 2025 and 40% in 2035, which is expected to reduce the power sector's carbon intensity by 45% and 65% in the respective years, said Energy and Natural Resources (KeTSA) Deputy Minister Datuk Ali Biju.

"To date, the installed capacity of RE in Malaysia is 7,995 megawatts (MW), equivalent to 22.5% of the country's total power mix, in which large and mini-hydropower plants will contribute 5,863.9MW, solar energy 1,368.9MW, biomass 637.6MW, and biogas 134.3MW," he said in his keynote address at the virtual Invest Malaysia 2021 Series 4 "Renewable Energy – Decarbonising Malaysia".

He said the targets will be achieved by the implementation of measures such as the large-scale solar programme, feed-in tariff, safe consumption, and net energy metering programme.

Ali said the country aspires to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target earliest by 2050 pending the completion of the Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy by 2022 is the most ambitious in Southeast Asia, compared to Indonesian's net-zero target by 2060, Thailand by 2065 to 2070, and Singapore as soon as viable in the second half of the century.

"These programmes are expected to generate not less than 20,000 jobs and the investment value of not less than RM12 billion to Malaysia's economy.

"The National Youth Climate Change Survey Malaysia survey revealed that 92% of young Malaysian think that climate change is a crisis. The Pew Research Centre International Science Survey 2019-2020 showed that among seven out of 10 or 73% Malaysian placed more priority on environmental protection even if it comes at the expense of economic growth and the creation of job opportunities," he said.

In the panel discussion of IMKL Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation CEO Tan Sri Shamsul Bahar Mohd Nor said KeTSA and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation will reveal the Hydrogen Economy Roadmap soon.

"The adoption of hydrogen economy means we will see more RE being used in Malaysia. Malaysia should look into hydroelectric power and solar panels because they can be converted into hydrogen.

"Sarawak has ample supply of hydro and this will be the source of clean energy. But for the peninsula, we are still looking at solar as the main source of RE," he said during the panel discussion entitled Repowering a Nation – Towards a Sustainable Future at the same event.

Shamsul Bahar said the way forward is to produce more green products to reduce carbon emissions.

"Green technology is vital to the sustainability of a nation. Malaysia should improve the innovation aspect and produce more green technology. According to the Government Green Procurement (GGP) scheme, by 2030, 100% of the government procurement will be coming from green products such as construction materials, solar panels, paper usage, and event organisation that involve no carbon emission in nature.

"GGP means the government is purchasing green products. We welcome the private sector to move into the green industry and green technology production," he said.

To decarbonise, he said, three important aspects are included such as avoidance, reduction, and replacement.

"Avoidance means to look at different sources of energy to replace the ones that we have. The installation of large-scale solar and mini-hydro can avoid using products that emit high carbon energy such as fossil fuel and natural gas.

"We should encourage more public participation in the reduction of GHG (greenhouse gas) by using low carbon appliances. For example, purchasing air-conditioners, refrigerators, and LED lightbulbs that use low energy are the ways the public can engage. Besides, the forest is the carbon sink, replace the carbon through reforestation," he added.