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## Equip communities with disaster preparedness

Borneo Post (KK), Malaysia



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Mariah Doksil

**KOTA KINABALU:** Communities must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to disasters before they occur, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah and Sarawak) Datuk Mustapha Sakmud.

He said disaster preparedness should not only be considered after an emergency had occurred, but required early preparation, training and awareness to ensure communities could respond quickly and effectively.

"Disasters can occur at any time and in various forms. Therefore, communities need basic knowledge of safety, first aid, risk management and the appropriate actions to take before, during and after a disaster," he said.

Mustapha was speaking at the Kampung Siaga 221: Disaster-Resilient Community programme organised by the Civil Defence Force (APM) Kota Kinabalu District at Kampung Kokol, Sepanggar here yesterday.

He said APM's Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) approach was commendable as it directly involved communities in identifying risks and strengthening their capacity to deal with disasters.

"I believe communities equipped with knowledge, skills and a spirit of cooperation will



Mustapha (centre) with heads of agencies involved in the programme.

be better able to respond quickly and systematically in the event of an emergency," he said.

Mustapha also highlighted the importance of combining education, training and community activities in building disaster resilience.

He said activities such as tug-of-war, the Power Saw Challenge and Hydraulic Cutter Challenge could strengthen ties and foster teamwork among villagers, while colouring activities could introduce children to safety and disaster preparedness from an early age.

"We want a community that not only understands disasters, but also knows what to do when faced with one," he said.

Mustapha also commended the

participation of various agencies, including ADTEC JTM Kota Kinabalu, Kota Kinabalu City Hall (DBKK) and Hospital Universiti Malaysia Sabah (HUMS).

He said ADTEC's corporate social responsibility activities and electrical safety awareness programme were important in educating villagers on the risks of electrical accidents, fires and loss of life.

DBKK contributed through exhibitions and information-sharing, while HUMS provided free health screenings for Kampung Kokol residents.

Mustapha said the collaboration between government agencies, institutions and the community

demonstrated how joint efforts could bring meaningful benefits to residents.

He urged villagers to share the knowledge and information gained through the programme with their families, neighbours and the wider community.

"In an emergency, the local community is among those closest to provide assistance while waiting for rescue agencies to arrive," he said.

Mustapha hoped the Kampung Siaga 221 programme would be expanded to more villages, particularly those exposed to disaster risks, with Kampung Kokol serving as an example of a prepared, caring, cooperative and resilient community.



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### SUMMARIES

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