



Masidi hits the gong to mark the opening of the seminar while Harun (third left), Rodeano (second left) and others look on.

Stop speculative statements on quake

BP 3.12.2015 3

KOTA KINABALU: Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Masidi Manjun has urged non-experts not to make baseless speculations on another earthquake as it would trigger apprehension and fear among the people.

Masidi said many 'experts' had mushroomed after the Ranau earthquake on June 5, claiming that another earthquake of certain magnitude would happen.

He pointed out that it was only possible to measure the magnitude of an earthquake on the Richter scale after an earthquake had happened.

"How can they know when an earthquake is going to happen and its measurements on the Richter scale?"

Masidi said such speculative statements would cause apprehension and fear among the people.

He said residents in Ranau had slept outdoors for weeks because they read that another earthquake was bound to happen on a certain date.

"Even the best professor will not be able to tell you the date of the next earthquake.

"Do not release statements unless it is coming from those who are real experts in this field."

Masidi said this when officiating at a two-day Natural Disaster Seminar organized by the Natural Disaster Research Centre, Faculty of Sciences and Natural Resources, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on Tuesday.

At the same time, Masidi called on UMS to quickly release statements rebutting speculative reports on earthquakes by non-experts.

"I think this is how we manage and minimize fear among the people."

On the other hand, Masidi highlighted the need to study the long-term effects of earthquake.

He said Ranau was faced with a shortage of clean water supply following the Ranau earthquake. While the campaign to donate water to Ranau residents received overwhelming support, Masidi said it had also created another problem, i.e. pollution caused by plastic bottles.

Now that the shortage of clean water supply in Ranau has been resolved, Masidi said he was worried about water supply to paddy fields in Kota Belud.

He said the mud floods following the earthquake had covered the river bed and rocks with mud.

"Everytime it rains and floods, the water flow is more rapid because there are no rocks to serve as resistance.

"When drought comes, the volume of water supplied to paddy fields is reduced.

"When water channelled to paddy fields decreases, our food resources will be affected.

"If we are not careful, we will face a crisis in the future," Masidi cautioned.

Hence, Masidi said there was a need to discuss and study these issues and advice the government on Plan B.

On another note, Masidi said the state government in the cabinet meeting had decided that all new buildings near areas where earthquake was likely to happen would have to ensure that the development plans take into consideration the effect of earthquake, which included Kota Kinabalu.

"The Public Works Department has been instructed to provide useful input so that in the future, City Hall can take into account such aspects when development plans are submitted to City Hall for approval."

He added that the Taiwan participants in the seminar would be able to advice the locals on constructing earthquake-compliant buildings.

Also present were UMS vice chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah and organizing chairman Dr Rodeano Hj Roslee.