

'Takeover of Coastal Cleanup Action Plan in line with MA63'

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MIRI: In line with the process of recovering autonomy under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), the Sarawak Natural Resources and Environment Board (NREB) has been proposed to take over the duties and role in managing the state's Coastal Cleanup Action Plan (PTPP) from the Department of Environment (DoE) Sarawak.

Deputy State Secretary Datu Buckland Bangik, in disclosing this, said he welcomes the proposal and supports the steps and actions taken by both DoE and NREB.

"Before this, DoE Sarawak was managing the state PTPP, and was also the secretary and advisor to the state JPTM (Oil Spill Cleanup Committee).

"However, in the process of recovering autonomy under MA63, it has been proposed that the task and role will be taken over by NREB, including the management of scheduled waste or hazardous waste resulting from beach clean-up activities due to oil spills," he said.

He said this in his officiating address at the opening ceremony of the 'Ex-Empurau Oil Spill Combat Training 2024' programme here Wednesday night.

The text of his speech was read by Sarawak Security and Enforcement Unit deputy director Dato Clarence Rorote Sagon.

Buckland, who is also Sarawak Disaster Management Committee deputy chairman, explained that in PTPP Sarawak, the roles of agencies under the JPTM have been clearly stated and the response structure has been outlined in the event of an oil spill pollution incident on the coast.

"In this plan, the main agency that needs to mobilise the response, in other words, chairing the JPTM, is the chairman of the State Disaster Management Committee, particularly for



Morris (left) presents a certificate of appreciation to a representative of a programme participant, witnessed by Clarence (third right) and others.

pollution incidents involving two or more parts, also known as state-level clean-up actions.

"However, if the pollution incident only involves one part, for example the pollution incident only happened on the beach around Miri, the Miri Resident will chair the JPTM for district or division level cleaning actions," he said.

Touching on the programme held, Buckland said it was jointly organised by DoE, Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (Sarawak Asset) and NREB.

"I believe the industry policy itself has determined that environmental emergency management is a top priority. The handling of emergency cases such as environmental pollution needs to be carried out in an orderly and systematic manner.

"The main goal is to ensure that the operation of the oil and gas industry in particular, does not result in cases of environmental pollution that will result in a disaster occurring in a certain place," he said.

He added that the involvement of all parties in the Ex-Empurau Exercise, both on the part of the federal and state governments, the private sector as well as the public, was a collaborative effort to ensure that pollution can be curbed and overcome together.

"I was informed that this Ex-Empurau Training involves Sarawak government agencies under the state JPTM which aims to test the ability of the state authorities, in the aspect of beach cleaning, if an oil spill pollutes the coast of Sarawak in particular.

"Through this exercise, all parties will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in dealing with oil spills and be able to make the best contribution, regardless of when and where oil spills occur in the future."

Also attending the event were DoE director general Dato Wan Abdul Latiff Wan Jaffar; Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (Upstream) senior general manager (Health, Safety and Environment Department) Morris Mail, and Sarawak Environment Quality controller Jack Liam.

The 2024 Ex-Empurau Oil Spill Combat Training Programme was held for three days from June 11 to 13, participated by 44 government departments and agencies, as well as three contractors.