Expert calls for green education strategy

Katie Johanna Vanhala (R) Associate expert on Education for Sustainable Development Unesco Office, Bangkok, speaks as Dr Mee Yong Choi (R) Programme Specialist in Education, Unesco office, Jakarta, looks on during a workshop at Rizqun International Hotel, yesterday. Picture: BT/Yusri Adanan

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN
Tuesday, November 15, 2011 - Page A07
AN EXPERT from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) yesterday stressed the need for government to provide a clear climate change education strategy, which could be adapted into policy and taught in schools. Dr Mee Yong Choi, programme specialist in Education Unit of the Unesco Office in Jakarta was talking to The Brunei Times on the sidelines of a workshop on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Addressing Climate Change Education yesterday.

She said education for sustainable development should touch the daily lives of the people.

"So, when we teach students, we need to find practical way rather than bringing up broad concepts," she said. Though climate change is one of a huge global issues, which has a significant economic impact, not everyone feels that one can be directly threatened, she said. "It (climate change) is a big problem but some do not see it as a problem," she added.

Climate change education strategy need to be developed within the Brunei education system and indigenous culture, which is suitable to the country's condition.

During the first day of the workshop, Dr Mee, who has been actively involved in promotion of Education for Sustainable Consumption as a part of ESD project at both research field and policy arena, also mentioned a pilot project on Green Schools Initiative that is scheduled to be launched early next year in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Under the programme, students will be exposed to issues related to energy and waste management.
Meanwhile, another facilitator at the workshop, Katie Johanna Vanhala, associate expert of ESD at the Unesco Office in Bangkok, Thailand, emphasised on the integration of the process of ESD into the education's system such as curriculum in the formal education programme and teacher's trainings. "So, the focus is to build awareness among the population about the need for sustainable development and how to approach climate change adaptation, how to prepare for disasters and disaster risk reduction," said Vanhala.

With regards to the teacher's role in increasing awareness and understanding on sustainable development issue among students in the classroom, she said that it can be done by looking at critical issues that the country, the community and the world are facing.

"Bring these into the classrooms and have constructive dialogues about it, and critically questioning why has this happened, if you were in the situation what would you do about it and how can we prepare them to confront the challenges that come," she said.

Among other topics that are scheduled to be discussed at the workshop are developing national ESD monitoring system and mapping and Moving ESD forward/propose working plan 2012-2014 for Brunei.

The Brunei Times