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Sabah can be renewable energy hub: Max

Barnard Yaang

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah can become a hub for renewable energy given the energy resources that it has at the moment.

Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili (pic) said Sabah at the moment has 120MW of power that comes from renewable energy.

On the whole, he said, the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (Seda), has approved 483MW with an approved capacity of 755MW.

"In production is about 120MW at the moment and the rest are in the process and these are biomass, solar, mini hydro, geothermal and biogas," he said.

The ministry, he said, is confident that in the next two years they can make a leap forward in this aspect.

He said that Sabah's potential in renewable energy is high in that it could produce 2,700MW from these sources.

However, the figure is purely inventory potential because some of the renewable energy could not be really tapped because of

its location such as in the highlands.

"The biomass for instance, the mills are far from each other and the grid does not exist there," he said.

He, nevertheless, did not discount the fact that in the long term, it could be harvested.

Sabah, he said, could lead the way in the exploitation of renewable energy because it has hydro, huge biomass and solar that could be harvested better than in most part of peninsula.

"So, we should pursue the idea that Sabah becomes a hub for renewable energy," he said.

On energy savings, Ongkili said there are several ways to save energy such as reducing waste, using retro fitting with the use of LED and also habits of turning of lights.

According to him, some estimated that they could harvest between 20 and 30 per cent of energy through energy efficiency. But in the mean time, Ongkili said they have to make SESB sustainable for the long term.

He said this is possible given the cooperation and capital expenditures from the Federal Government. "SESB, TNB and Seda

will map out our plan for the three blueprint for generation, transmission and distribution and posting it for schedule," he said.

He said the Ministry is thankful that the Federal Government, especially the Prime Minister, is very open to resolving the challenges in Sabah.

"But we need the cooperation and tolerance from our people," he said.

Ongkili said that they also need to resolve power and scrap metal thefts because while it may be small it does have major impact on interruption.

The society and the JKJKs, he said, also must play their role in informing the local engineer about trees that have the potential to fall on power lines.

Trees that fall on power lines and cause blackouts, he said, can be convert it into Saidi.

"I have also asked them to improve their public relations and to be consistent on complaints because this can go a long way," he said, adding that the SESB could harvest easily between 5 and 7 per cent in reducing interruption.