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PRESS RELEASE

Southeast Asian scientists join forces for stronger regional climate resilience

Bangkok, 4 September 2019 – Southeast Asian scientists yesterday called for stronger research collaboration in the region to face the growing threat of climate change. Speaking at the Asia Pacific Climate Week in Bangkok, they warned that higher extreme precipitation will disrupt agricultural production, which in turn may adversely affect the region's food security.

"In a 1.5-degree warming scenario, Southeast Asia will have a 7% increase in extreme precipitation events; while in a 2-degree warming world, there will be a 10% increase in extreme precipitation events. That will have a huge impact in agriculture," said Lourdes Tibig, a lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and a member of the Philippine Climate Change Commission's National Panel of Technical Experts.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), by 2050 crop yields will decrease by 25% if we do not address climate change now. "Numbers do not tell lies. All the more that scientists' collaboration across Southeast Asia is needed," Tibig said.

Southeast Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change. It is bound by more than its proximity but also with their cultures, and customary practices.

Responding to the climate challenge, the group of climate, forestry and agriculture scientists from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam laid the foundation for a regional network to use science as basis for long-term development strategies.

"We should be aware of our vulnerability. The level of readiness in facing the impacts climate change among countries in Southeast Asia is different. By sharing our practices, we can collectively address the knowledge gaps that exists in the region," said Mahawan Karuniasa, Chairman of the Indonesia Expert Network for Climate Change and Forestry (APIK Indonesia Network).

"We need a network to strengthen our engagement because this is the key factor in enhancing capacity and improving our resiliency," said Karuniasa.

Southeast Asia is among the world's largest producers of rice after India and China. The region is a global hotspot of biodiversity, with the third largest intact forest area in the world.

ABOUT

The Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC) is an international climate and energy policy group promoting climate resilience and low carbon development.

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