

Food for Thought

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Low Energy Consumption Reduces Carbon Emissions

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Low Energy Consumption Reduces Carbon Emissions

By Melati Mohd Ariff

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Many people wonder how a low carbon lifestyle can contribute to the environment in a positive manner. However, those who are aware of environmental issues will realise that improper usage of appliances contributes to the build up of carbon emissions in the environment.

When there are more carbon emissions, there is bound to be more carbon dioxide in the air. Has the intensity of carbon emissions become a crucial factor for environment sustainability?

Sustainable development can only be achieved through a reduction in the usage of carbon in daily life.

It advocates low consumption of energy, thereby reducing the amount of carbon emissions into the environment.

GLOBAL WARMING

Carbon emissions are linked to the 'green house' issue, which leads to global warming.

Among the possible consequences of global warming, include a rise in the sea level due to the melting of polar caps, destruction of flora and

fauna and extreme weather conditions.

According to S. Piarapakaran, president of the Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER), countries that depend on fossil fuels have created an imbalance in the environment.

"We are addicted to resources for industrial use, power consumption and transportation, to name a few. "We try to look for alternatives to reduce the impact on the environment but there is no change in our lifestyles. In other words, we maintain the same lifestyle that destroys the environment (but) at the same time, search for solutions everywhere," he told Bernama.

RECYCLING WATER

He said that people tried to maintain a low carbon lifestyle in the past, but it has slowly faded away with time.

Piarapakaran said that people used to store rainwater in their homes so that they could use it for cleaning and watering plants.

"In the past, (we could see) huge water containers behind houses, which were used to store rainwater. This practice should be continued," he said, since this practice helps to save water and energy.

He said that up to 35 percent of the cost incurred in treating raw water is due to power consumption, which leads to more carbon emissions into the environment. Piarapakaran believes that people should recycle rainwater and use it for cleaning and watering plants.

He also urged people to use bicycles. "Today, very few people use bicycles. Cycling is a good form of exercise and it also reduces the amount of carbon emissions, which are released through public and private vehicles," he says.

CAR POOLING

He also touched upon the 'forgotten' practice of car pooling. "Almost everyone drives to work today and this indirectly contributes to global warming and traffic congestion," he said.

He also commented on the act of leaving electrical appliances on standby mode, in the case of the remote control of a television. "This practice increases the power consumption of the appliance, up to 35 percent.

"For example, if you use a 200-watt television for three hours in a day and leave it on standby mode, you will pay around RM113 (a month), in which the cost of leaving it on standby is RM66," he says.

He also advised users to switch off electrical appliances after usage, to prevent power surges and leakages, which are dangerous.

AIR-CONDITIONERS

Many people do not realise that they are leading a lifestyle that increases the amount of carbon emissions into the environment.

According to Piarapakaran, excessive usage of air-conditioners also affects the environment in a negative way.

"Apart from the usage of air-conditioners, people should take into consideration their consumption of water, electricity and petrol," he said, adding that most of these daily practices increase the amount of carbon emissions.

CLICK

AWER launched the CLICK website (www.click.org.my) on Dec 7, 2011 and the function was officiated by the Deputy British High Commissioner, Ray Kyles.

Piarapakaran said that CLICK was developed as a 'one-stop centre', for people to check the amount of carbon emissions.

He said that AWER is a non-governmental body, which focuses on research, innovation and creativity, so that Malaysians can lead a low carbon lifestyle.

"CLICK is a one-stop centre for people so that they can lead a low carbon lifestyle. It also provides tips on power saving," he said.

STUDIES ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

He said that AWER has completed two studies, which can help consumers in choosing energy-efficient electrical appliances.

Piarapakaran said that these studies are part of the Sustainable Production and Consumption, funded by the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur and the British government.

The findings revealed that a coil-based kettle has greater energy efficiency than an appliance with a flat heating element.

"Products that are not energy efficient, may increase power consumption and the overall cost of its operation," he added.

In fact, leading a low carbon lifestyle is not as difficult as what some people imagine. In fact, it is just the opposite. It simply consists of a few changes in the current lifestyle.

Low carbon lifestyle is actually simple and cheap.

-- BERNAMA

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