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## Iskandar Malaysia Launches Low-carbon Society Blueprint

From Minggu Simon Lhasa

DOHA, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) has launched the Iskandar Malaysia Low-Carbon Society (LCS) Blueprint in a bid to reduce the economic corridor's carbon intensity emissions by 50 per cent once it reaches maturity in 2025.

"It is a message to the world that Iskandar Malaysia and Malaysia have its ways of contributing to a better environment now and the future," said IRDA's chief executive, Datuk Ismail Ibrahim.

Ismail, who launched the Blueprint as a side event at the 18th session of the Conference of Parties (COP18) here last Friday, said: "We will start implementing the 12 Actions outlined in the blueprint during the first quarter of 2013."

"While we are going through the process of economic development with physical development, at the same time we shall continue with our commitment to preserve the environment," he said.

He said environmental issue was one of the topics that always cropped up during his engagements with investors and potential investors, especially foreign multinationals and foreign investors.

"They always asked what Iskandar Malaysia is doing with regard to protecting the environment while it continues to experience economic growth.

"That question is a clear signal that investors today and in the future always look for a balance between growth and the need to protect the environment, he said.

Ismail said the multinationals and investors wanted to embrace the investment that would run in tandem with the need to protect the environment, and what were being done in Iskandar Malaysia were actually something that supported that agenda.

The blueprint is a result of a joint effort between Japan and Malaysia, which started in July 2011.

The project, Development of Low-Carbon Society Scenarios for Asian Regions, was initiated by the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS).

Sponsored by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the project brought together a team of multi-disciplinary researchers from Kyoto University, the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES), Okayama University and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) with a view to define Low-Carbon Society (LCS) visions and crafting a roadmap towards LCS at the national and city-regional level.

The project will showcase best practices in LCS for the Asian Regions and will therefore benefit not only Iskandar Malaysia and Malaysia, but also the Asian regions.

It is a hands-on project where researchers and government officials of Asian countries work together in implementing research output within the cities or regions involved, leading to the eventual establishment of an Asian Low-Carbon Society network.

It is in line with Malaysia's voluntary commitment to reduce the country's carbon intensity by up to 40 per cent by year 2020 (based on 2005 levels) and the research project began with a pilot study of Iskandar Malaysia.

"Although it is still early days, our research teams have already started some initial programmes such as the pilot project for Low-Carbon Village at Felda Taib Andak in Iskandar Malaysia, the use of CASBEE tools to assess Iskandar Malaysia's regional environmental performance and the launching of Iskandar Malaysia Smart City Framework," said Ismail.

He said the Blueprint, with its 12 Actions and its 300 plus programmes, must be implemented in a timely and proactive manner by all, and IRDA, as the regional authority, would play a lead role in ensuring that the Actions were carried out.

"UTM and our research partners from Japan will continue to play key roles in the implementation of these Actions, in which they are the main instigators," he said.

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Professor Dr Ho Chin Song, the project manager of Malaysia/Japan Joint Research project for Development of Low-Carbon Society Scenarios for Asian Regions, said UTM would be the hub for training and Iskandar Malaysia is the test bed for low-carbon technologies and policies that could be implemented in other Asian countries.

He said Low-Carbon Asia Research Centre has already been set up in UTM and would train Asian urban managers to understand how a low-carbon society works.

He said Iskandar Malaysia Low-Carbon Society Blueprint was the first of its kind to guide or transform a region into a low-carbon area.

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