

# Malaysia eyeing cooperation with Netherlands on waste management

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government is looking forward to developing working relationships with the Netherlands on waste management, according to Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin.

Given the progress and success achieved by the Netherlands in waste management, Malaysia could adopt some of its policies and practices, she said.

“We import clean plastics but the Netherlands imports rubbish plastics and they manage to do it very well.

“This is something that Malaysia should learn from the Netherlands, (on how to) conduct the business and process,” she said when met at a seminar on sustainable waste management, here today.

The seminar was organised by the Netherlands Embassy in conjunction with the International Greentech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference Malaysia (IGEM 2019), which is being held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from today until Nov 11.

She said the government is focusing on engagement with the community and getting down to the grassroots to ensure their involvement in waste management programmes.

“Ours is at introductory stage; therefore, we can learn from their (Netherlands) trial and error so that we can do a fast-track to reach that level.

“Our basic challenges are still for the community to have good practices. Throw the rubbish in the rubbish can, separate sources. All that has been introduced but it has not been taken up seriously by Malaysians,” she said.

She said the ministry is conducting a pilot study in the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) area on the ‘trash to cash’ programme, which will be introduced nationwide later.

In her speech, Zuraida said she was impressed with the waste management practices of countries like the Netherlands, Japan and Singapore.

“I think we did not put enough attention with regard to waste management. We could have done that 20 years ago. But it is ok; we are never too late because I’m going to ‘turn trash to cash’,” she said.

Zuraida said such programmes have been conducted in schools and the ministry plans to engage students with local housing committees nearby to reach the community in low-cost housing areas.

“Now we have begun launching our programme — trash to cash, to encourage them to pick up rubbish and see it as money, at least to pay for maintenance fees. This is something we are doing on the ground,” she said.

Zuraida said the country should capitalise on green economy activities as they have the potential to boost business.

The ministry is expected to launch the National Cleanliness Policy on Nov 3, which will contain guidelines on waste management including imports and the recycling industry, she added.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands Ambassador to Malaysia, Aart Jacobi, told the media that the Netherlands will share its experience on waste management at business-to-business meetings with Malaysia. — *Bernama*