

42 CONTAINERS

## UK TO TAKE BACK ILLEGAL PLASTIC WASTE

Yeo lauds the move, which highlights plastic pollution as a global issue

KUALA LUMPUR

**T**HE United Kingdom has agreed to take back 42 containers comprising illegal shipment of plastic waste from Malaysia, in accordance with the Basel Convention.

The British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur and the Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry (MESTECC) in a joint statement yesterday said that authorities and shipping agents were working together in the repatriation process.

The containers, which had arrived at Penang Port between March last year and March this year, were deemed illegal as they failed to comply with the necessary import papers.

Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin said the British High Commission's proactive action of working closely with MESTECC in taking back the containers was highly commendable.

This cooperation, she said, signified a recognition that plastic pollution was a global issue that required commitment from all countries to address the problem.

"We hope the cooperation and understanding between Malaysia and the UK will set an example for other countries with compa-



Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin showing the plastic waste to be returned to the exporting countries, including to the United Kingdom. FILE PIC

nies exporting contaminated plastic waste to other developing nations," she said.

British High Commissioner to Malaysia Charles Hay said the UK government shared the same concerns on plastic waste.

"The repatriation of these 42 containers reflects our commitment to fighting the illegal plastic waste trade," he said, adding that the UK looks forward to working with Malaysia on the broader agenda of conserving the environment and addressing climate change.

The announcement came fol-

lowing a recent visit by the UK's Environment Agency (EA) representatives, which was organised by the British High Commission in response to news of the illegal shipment of plastic waste from the UK.

The statement said EA representatives held a series of meetings with MESTECC, the Environment Department, Royal Malaysian Customs Department, relevant port authorities and agencies in Malaysia.

It said these meetings had resulted in a greater mutual understanding of the regulatory

framework and policies related to trade in plastic waste, as well as an exchange of knowledge in sharing intelligence, inspection procedures, identification and repatriation of plastic waste.

MESTECC and the high commission are already collaborating on a number of initiatives in tackling plastic pollution, including jointly hosting a VIP screening of BBC Studio's *Blue Planet 2* to raise public awareness on the perils of single-use plastics.

In addition, the high commis-

sion is offering UK expertise from WRAP Global, a UK sustainability charity, to support MESTECC's initiatives in setting up the Malaysia Plastics Pact.

The high commission will also be sending UK experts to deliver a venture workshop in partnership with MESTECC to promote research and innovation in mitigating the use of plastic.

The statement also mentioned that the UK is set to become the joint chair of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change next year. **Berna-**