

Headline **Manage electronic waste with government says Masidi**
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Manage electronic waste with government, says Masidi

KOTA KINABALU: Telecommunication companies and manufacturers of electronic devices are encouraged to come up with methods to manage and handle electronic waste (e-waste) with the government.

Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun said one of the best ways is to introduce a buy back scheme for old electronic devices when customers wish to purchase a new model.

"Say for Nokia, when you buy a new model, you surrender your old model," he suggested, adding the government could provide incentives at the same time.

"There is a need to look into the finer points of the concessionaire agreement for a take-back programme

which involves the industry, the mechanism to be put in place, collection and payment. The telco providers and the state can collaborate to solve the problem because they (telco providers) have more expertise than the users and the government." According to the Waste Management Association of Malaysia, e-waste makes up two per cent of the garbage, but produces up to 80 per cent of the lead in landfills.

Records from the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics (Mimos Malaysia) also shows 8.5 million PCs and laptops were owned by individuals, industries, education institutions and government departments as of the end of 2008.

However, more than half of the PCs were obsolete.

"As for mobile phones in Sabah, the number increased from around 42,000 in 1999 to more than 752,000 at the end of 2008, and I think it's close to a million now," he said when officiating at the seminar on e-waste organized by the Environmental Action Centre (EAC) Sabah at Promenade Hotel here yesterday.

In his speech, Masidi said a majority of the public were not aware that e-waste, particularly computers, contain toxic substances such as lead, cadmium, barium and mercury that pose health and environmental threats.

He added that policy could also be enacted to enforce proper management of e-waste necessary, but stressed that the approach was more towards creating awareness

instead of penalizing offenders.

Masidi, who is also the chairman of EAC Sabah, said there was a need to change the habit of the people and generate awareness of the dangers of the leakage from discarded e-waste.

A member of the Perak Executive Council, Datuk Hamidah Osman, who was one of the speakers yesterday, also called for a concerted

effort between the media, non-profit organizations (NGOs), authorities and manufacturers to tackle the issue of e-waste management.

"There are lots of problems that we cannot tackle, such as solid waste, but that should not stop us from doing so; there are easier matters that we can do," she stressed.

Hamidah also said the Perak state government would be implementing the 3Rs - reduce lead acid battery usage, replace lead acid batteries with lithium polymer batteries and recycle the lithium polymer batteries, which are completely green and 100 per cent recyclable.

Companies in Perak were also given notice to cease using lead acid batteries, while telcos and golf clubs were encouraged to use green batteries.

In her presentation, Hamidah pointed out that the National Green Technology Policy had been adopted as an agenda for the state government, while at the same time applied to the federal government to consider granting the state of Perak green technology status.

"We also urge all state assemblymen regardless of background and political creed to work together to promote, educate, create awareness and ensure the success of the green technology program." Also present were Department of Environment Sabah director Tuan Haji Abdul Razak Abdul Manap, and organizing chairman William Baya.

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Masidi (left) and Ramidah talk about e-waste management at a press conference yesterday.