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UNITEN Establishes International Standard National Energy Excellence Centre To Strengthen Energy Transition

By Cynthia Ignatius - June 30, 2022



Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) has established the National Energy Center (NEC), a national center of excellence of international standard to deepen aspects of Energy Transition, covering issues of climate change, sustainable development and renewable energy (RE) at the national and global levels.

The university owned by Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) houses five energy centers of excellence under the NEC, to carry out various energy-related research and projects, in collaboration with experts from renowned local and foreign universities and industry leaders, with the aspiration of making Malaysia a Hub Regional Energy. The initial launch of the NEC at UNITEN Putrajaya today was jointly officiated by the Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (KeTSA),

Datuk Ali Biju and his counterpart at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim. They represented their respective Ministers, Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan and Dato 'Sri Dr. Adham Baba. In the speech read by his Deputy, Takiyuddin said the establishment of the NEC at UNITEN was a proactive effort by higher learning institutions to contribute expertise in the national development agenda, including in efforts to increase RE capacity and address carbon emissions.

"The establishment of the NEC is also significant because it mobilizes the efforts of various stakeholders to jointly deepen and find solutions to energy-related issues that are being faced around the world. I am confident that if the NEC is well managed, it will be able to produce solutions to national and global energy-related issues that are plaguing us," he said.

Indeed, NEC will play a strategic role in strengthening Malaysia's commitment to make the country carbon neutral as early as 2050 and meet the aspirations of zero net carbon emissions in the Sustainability Pathway 2050 (TNB Sustainability Pathway – SP2050). The five centers of excellence that will be placed under one NEC roof are the Institute of Sustainable Energy (ISE), Institute of Power Engineering (IPE), Institute of Energy Infrastructure (IEI), Institute of Energy Policy & Research (IEPRE) and Institute of Informatics & Computing in Energy (IICE) . The NEC will form a Strategic National Energy Framework with the target of Malaysia as an energy hub and industry players having the opportunity to become strategic partners by opening a branch or satellite incubator laboratory at the energy center. These studies are expected to benefit a safer, more environmentally friendly and commensurate future with the development of a low-carbon digital economy, in line with transforming the global energy sector from fossil fuel-based to zero carbon by the second half of this century. Among those that will be explored in depth are the use of hydrogen, space-based solar power, magma power, algal power, embedded solar power, wind power and fusion power for renewable energy as well as the development of the Electric Vehicle (EV) technology ecosystem. Describing the establishment of the NEC as timely as the world faces the issue of rising electricity generation costs due to rising fuel costs, Takiyuddin challenged researchers at the NEC to study long -term options and measures to ensure electricity supply remains reliable and affordable.

Meanwhile, Dr Adham in a speech read by his Deputy suggested the NEC to collaborate in research at the regional energy transition stage, particularly ASEAN, China and European countries as well as international organizations. "The NEC can also create high-level forums between renowned academics, industry experts and senior government officials with ASEAN member countries and the International Energy Agency (IEA) to discuss in depth on critical issues in the field of energy," he said.