

# Working together to reduce carbon footprint

Public lecture reiterates need for lifestyle change to ensure sustainability

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IF BUYING decisions are governed by wants instead of needs, if things we use daily are disposed of instead of recycled and if society requires law and enforcement instead of conscience to govern its actions, then mankind will not win the battle against global warming.

This was the message delivered by Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry (KeTTHA) secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Zaini Ujang at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

At the public lecture titled "The Age of Sustainability: From Philosophy to Cultural Transformation," Zaini was supported by UPM vice-chancellor Professor Datin Paduka Aini Ideris, who said in her opening speech that all members of the society are responsible for ensuring successful sustainable green practices.

Aini said the process of reducing one's carbon footprint and ensuring its continual practice boils down to the simple things such as reducing paper use and making conscious efforts to decrease water and electricity usage.

In his speech, Zaini said global warming impacted lives greatly.

He also brought attention to the Stern report, published in 2006. It warned that if people do not act now, the economic impacts of climate change will affect all countries.

The most suffering will be the poorer nations.

To show people the impact of their actions, it also recommended that companies be charged for



Zaini (third from left) presenting the electric bicycles from GreenTech Malaysia to Mohd Ameerul (second from right).

the amount of carbon produced either through taxation, trade-offs or regulatory policies.

Zaini said Malaysians could take the first step in realising this aim by adopting a minimalist approach to their lifestyle.

During one of his many trips to Finland, the greenest country in the world according to the 2016 environmental performance index, Zaini was impressed by how people were proud to admit they did not own cars but took

public transport.

Understanding this arrangement may be too extreme for local mindsets, he urged that we at least start by changing the lights in our homes to energy saving bulbs.

The next thing is to look into the preservation of local rivers, the source of our drinking water supply.

"Since the beginning, we have regarded our rivers as a means for transportation, not to mention

a place to dilute pollution and receive effluents. We must change that," said Zaini.

The event ended with the handing over of several units of electric bicycles from GreenTech Malaysia to the UPM student body.

UPM Student Council president Mohd Ameerul Ishak received the bicycles on behalf of the student body. This was preceded by a prize giving ceremony for a green campus competition.