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Open burning: Malaysia urges Asean member countries to take action

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia urges Asean member states to take legal action against companies involved in open burning, causing transboundary haze.

The call was made by Malaysia at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Asean Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution in conjunction with the Asean Ministerial Meeting on Environment (AMME) in Cambodia from Oct 7 - 9.

The Malaysian delegation was led by Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (MESTECC)

Deputy Minister, Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis.

MESTECC in a statement yesterday said Malaysia also called for legal action to be taken regardless of the country of origin of the company involved.

"Malaysia also noted that although forest and land fire issues are domestic issues, transboundary air pollution must be addressed holistically.

"Malaysia is also ready to extend firefighting assistance to affected countries to prevent the recurrence of transboundary haze incidents that have an impact on socio-economics and

health of the people in the Asean region," the statement said.

At the meeting, Malaysia shared the findings of a study carried out by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in 2015.

"(According to the study) estimated economic losses hit RM1.18 billion during the haze incident in 2015 involving the tourism sector, small businesses, increasing medical costs and a lack of income for taxi drivers.

"Malaysia estimates higher economic losses during the haze incident this year," the statement said. — Bernama