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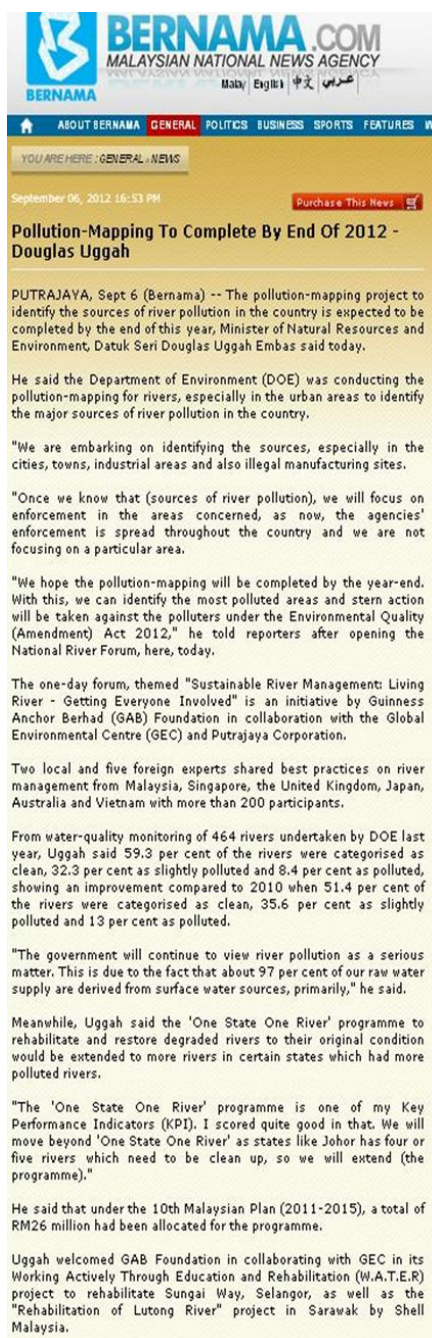
Headline: **Pollution-Mapping to complete by end of 2012 – Douglas**

Publication : **Bernama.com**

Section : **General**

Page : **-**

Date : **6 Sept 2012**



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Pollution-Mapping To Complete By End Of 2012 - Douglas Uggah

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 6 (Bernama) -- The pollution-mapping project to identify the sources of river pollution in the country is expected to be completed by the end of this year, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas said today.

He said the Department of Environment (DOE) was conducting the pollution-mapping for rivers, especially in the urban areas to identify the major sources of river pollution in the country.

"We are embarking on identifying the sources, especially in the cities, towns, industrial areas and also illegal manufacturing sites.

"Once we know that (sources of river pollution), we will focus on enforcement in the areas concerned, as now, the agencies' enforcement is spread throughout the country and we are not focusing on a particular area.

"We hope the pollution-mapping will be completed by the year-end. With this, we can identify the most polluted areas and stern action will be taken against the polluters under the Environmental Quality (Amendment) Act 2012," he told reporters after opening the National River Forum, here, today.

The one-day forum, themed "Sustainable River Management: Living River - Getting Everyone Involved" is an initiative by Guinness Anchor Berhad (GAB) Foundation in collaboration with the Global Environmental Centre (GEC) and Putrajaya Corporation.

Two local and five foreign experts shared best practices on river management from Malaysia, Singapore, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and Vietnam with more than 200 participants.

From water-quality monitoring of 464 rivers undertaken by DOE last year, Uggah said 59.3 per cent of the rivers were categorised as clean, 32.3 per cent as slightly polluted and 8.4 per cent as polluted, showing an improvement compared to 2010 when 51.4 per cent of the rivers were categorised as clean, 35.6 per cent as slightly polluted and 13 per cent as polluted.

"The government will continue to view river pollution as a serious matter. This is due to the fact that about 97 per cent of our raw water supply are derived from surface water sources, primarily," he said.

Meanwhile, Uggah said the 'One State One River' programme to rehabilitate and restore degraded rivers to their original condition would be extended to more rivers in certain states which had more polluted rivers.

"The 'One State One River' programme is one of my Key Performance Indicators (KPI). I scored quite good in that. We will move beyond 'One State One River' as states like Johor has four or five rivers which need to be clean up, so we will extend (the programme)."

He said that under the 10th Malaysian Plan (2011-2015), a total of RM26 million had been allocated for the programme.

Uggah welcomed GAB Foundation in collaborating with GEC in its Working Actively Through Education and Rehabilitation (W.A.T.E.R) project to rehabilitate Sungai Way, Selangor, as well as the "Rehabilitation of Lutong River" project in Sarawak by Shell Malaysia.