

Youth gather for international conference on global warming

| More than 100 young people from 37 countries will attend an international conference on global warming from Feb. 20 to 25 in Yogyakarta.

The conference was organized by Gadjah Mada University (UGM), the Yogyakarta provincial administration and the Youth and Sports Ministry.

Riorini Dyah Moehkarti of UGM's international affairs office said there have been dozens of global warming conferences in the past, but this year's conference would be different as it would focus on climate change. He said climate change was a global problem that impacted people throughout the globe.

"As agents of change, it's important for [youth] to be familiar with the issues so future generations will become more environmentally friendly," Riorini said Friday.

Participating delegates will come from Vietnam, Singapore, Mexico, China, Japan, Italy and Spain, among other nations.

Researcher Eko Sugiharto of UGM's Center for Environment Studies said the conference would focus on two main points: How people can adapt to climate change and how to slow it down.

"As agents of change, it's important for [youth] to be familiar with the issues so future generations will become more environmentally friendly."

Learning how to adapt to climate change is urgent, Eko said. He cited the example of residents of Gunungkidul in Yogyakarta, who traditionally dried cassava in the sun to make gaplek (sun-dried cassava), which used to be a staple of their diet. Now that the dry season is unpredictable, residents had to come up with a way to adapt.

One way they did so was by changing their consumption patterns, he said.

"They have to spend extra money to buy other kinds of food because they cannot produce gaplek because of climate change," Eko said.

Eko said conference participants would be grouped into three panel discussion groups. One panel would discuss how to manage the environment, another a youth initiative on environmental conservation and the third the benefits of certain kinds of conservation.

"We expect that a number of recommendations will result from the panel discussions to be used as input for both the legislative and executive institutions in developing policies according to the conditions of their respective environments," Eko said.