

# DID experts going to China

## Officers to learn in-depth water resources management

By **FATIMAH ZAINAL**  
fatimah@thestar.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia will learn the best practices for water resources management from China following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on co-operation in the field.

National Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said Malaysia was keen on understanding how China handled water issues, from flood mitigation to water distribution, better.

"The MoU is very timely considering the challenges relating to climate change and water management," he told reporters after ink-

ing the MoU with his Chinese counterpart, Water Resources Minister Chen Lei, yesterday.

China faces water scarcity during winter and autumn, and 40% of its beaches are ravaged by typhoon every year.

While Malaysia rarely experienced water shortage, Dr Wan Junaidi said water distribution here was "not yet perfect" with inadequate infrastructure.

"Our infrastructure is not enough to handle water distribution, especially to channel water from areas with surplus to others experiencing scarcity," he said.

Dr Wan Junaidi added that Malaysia was "limited by budget" and there was a need to adjust it in

order to not lag behind.

China, on the other hand, practised a funding system that provided zero-interest financial backing for anyone involved in water projects, he pointed.

"We might discuss with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to plan for easy bank loans for any parties interested in developing water infrastructure," Dr Wan Junaidi said.

As the immediate next step after yesterday's signing, the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) would be sending its experts to China to study how to mitigate losses caused by typhoons.

Dr Wan Junaidi added that around RM1.8bil, or 80% of the

budget allocated to the ministry, went to the DID.

Present at the ceremony were Wan Junaidi's deputy Datuk Hamim Samuri, secretary-general Datuk Seri Azizan Ahmad and China ambassador to Malaysia Dr Huang Huikang.

In a separate development, Dr Wan Junaidi revealed that the Access and Benefit Sharing Bill aimed at protecting natural resources was not tabled at the last Parliament sitting as the document was in English.

Najib's signature was required for the tabling to proceed but he was away in India. "So, the Bill is now slated to be tabled in the next Parliament session in July."