Asia-Pacific youth calls for more involvement, commitment in region’s water issues

CHIANG MAI -- Attaining water security in the Asia-Pacific region requires the involvement and support of all stakeholders; thus, involving the youth in addressing water issues will prove to be crucial.

This was the message of more than 40 international and local participants of the ASEAN+3 Future Leaders for Water program that was launched recently in Chiang Mai, Thailand from May 13 to 21.

The Chiang Mai Youth Declaration called on governments and other institutions to recognize youth as an important stakeholder by creating mechanisms and incentives that promote intergenerational exchange of experiences, good practices and expertise to empower young people as well as encouraged the youth to mobilize initiatives in support of water security in the region.

Participants, through the Declaration, furthermore recognized the importance of education in raising awareness of communities and other stakeholders on water, and asked for reforms in the formal and non-formal education system to mainstream water issues. They acknowledged that young people should also lead initiatives that cut down carbon emissions as a response to climate change and water-related disasters.

Read in front of key leaders and experts in the region and the media, the Chiang Mai Youth Declaration was one of the outputs of the participants of the AFLW.

The AFLW program had four components, two of which launched the implementation in Thailand: the Asia-Pacific Youth Water Forum (APYWF) and the 1st ASEAN+3 Youth Leaders for Climate Change Forum (AYCC 2013). At the end of the two events, participants were expected to produce the Chiang Mai Youth Declaration on Water and regional action plans, which were read to regional political leaders and experts.

The APYWF is a component of the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit (APWS), which is a collaboration of efforts of institutions such as the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, the Thai government, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, among others.

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