

Earth on the verge of major catastrophes, warns UK scientist

KUCHING: World leaders must take urgent measures to address global climate change, said Professor Dr Peter Higgins of the University of Edinburgh.

He said it would be too late if these leaders were to wait for major catastrophes to happen before they act.

"They believed in scientists on how the plane flies, how cars run and when to see their

doctors. But when scientists tell them to act urgently to address global climate change, they prefer not to act.

"Actually they have the capacity to act and address the issue," Higgins told The Borneo Post on the sideline of the 'Best of Both Worlds Conference' held here yesterday. He stressed that if world leaders were to leave the matter as it is now, then

the world would face environmental catastrophes in the very near future.

"When we talk about a mere one to three degree centigrade of global climate change, it really means that there would be some major disasters going to happen in the near future.

"For instance, if there is a slight change in temperature, then there will be major ice melt which would cause major

floods in some areas but severe drought in other areas," he stressed. Higgins described the present state of Earth now as "already very critical" and needed urgent attention and "treatment".

"But politicians and policy makers seemed to focus more on economic development of their respective countries rather than the environmental issues as

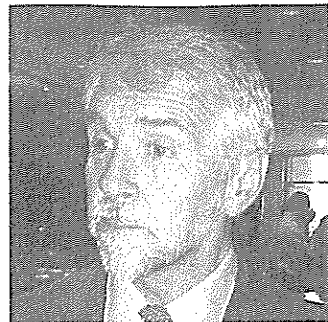
shown by the failure of the Copenhagen Summit," he pointed out.

He added that his main task now, was to train and educate future leaders "as I don't have the opportunity to meet up with world leaders such as President Barack Obama".

Reports by top scientists are available for reference, so world leaders don't have to wait for major catastrophes

to happen before they should address environmental issues, he reiterated. He said the legacy of hope was now on the younger generation, who were more concerned over global environmental issues.

"It is at this point that environmental education is necessary to provide awareness for future leaders to act, failing which we failed as educators," he said.



Prof Higgins