

SARAWAK SEEKS GLOBAL RECOGNITION FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT

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An aerial view of Sarawak's rainforest. Picture: The Star/ANN

SARAWAK Chief Minister Adenan Satem's policy on sustainable forests' management aims to ensure forests in Sarawak can be sustainably managed based on international standards, and be recognised by the world community, said Sarawak Forestry Department director Sapuan Ahmad.

According to Sapuan there are 12 forest timber licences within the Hope of Borneo (HoB) areas, which are progressing towards forest certification by 2017.

Sapuan said a more comprehensive database on the richness of Sarawak's biodiversity within the HoB areas has been documented, adding that a number of new species of flora and fauna was discovered, which further enhances the image and value of these HoB areas.

He said various scientific expeditions has been conducted, which includes scientific expeditions to Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary in Sri Aman, and Batang Balleh expedition in Miri, in collaboration with the Sarawak Energy Berhad and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

"An orangutan strategic action plan has been drafted in collaboration with the various state government agencies and the wildlife conservation society," he said when officiating the Heart of Borneo Government Agencies Workshop in Kuching on Tuesday.

Besides that, he said the Sarawak Forest Department has also conducted specific focus research on salt lick ecology, the Gunung Mulu orchids project, and the wild cat project that specifically focused on species 'Neofelis Diardii', all of which are still on-going.

Sapuan said this national and state mission needs support and cooperation from all the relevant government agencies, in order to effectively implement HoB activities in Sarawak as a team.

Hence, he said the workshop serves to enhance government agencies' collaboration and consultation within the HoB areas in order to achieve sustainable land use and rural communities' development agenda of the state.

HoB Declaration was signed in Bali in 2007 between the government of Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, which serves as a major testament to the world of these three countries sharing one noble conservation vision.

The HoB initiative is aimed towards enhancing conservation and sustainable development while minimising forest degradation, the associated loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, thus further improving the welfare of those living on the majestic island of Borneo which is approximately 20 million hectares of contiguous tropical forest.