

13 MAY 1996

"ONE MALAYSIAN ONE TREE" PROGRAMME TO GREEN THE NATION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 13 (Bernama) -- A long-term effort to green the nation, the "One Malaysian One Tree" programme will be initiated in line with the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to landscape the country.

Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today each Malaysian would be encouraged to plant one tree under the programme.

The concept of the programme resulted from government's awareness that sustainable forest management would be facilitated through the involvement and support of a broad cross-section of the population, he added.

The programme was one of the projects planned to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Malaysia's celebration of World Forestry Day, he told reporters after opening the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia-University of British Columbia Conference on "Ecological, Social and Political Issues on the Certification of Forest Management" here.

Dr Lim said the Malaysia Timber Council had allocated RM30,000 for an annual award, the "Green Award," to be given for outstanding contribution towards sustainable forest management in the country.

A scientific expedition would also be initiated to undertake scientific study and explore the potential for eco-tourism development of a major forest reserve in the country, he added.

Earlier, in his speech, Dr Lim said Malaysia was committed to managing its forests and, to ensure this, a total of 14.1 million of 33 million hectares of natural forests had been designated as Permanent Forest Estates to be managed sustainably.

Malaysia's national committee on sustainable forest management had been actively developing measures to operationalise the International Timber Tropical Organisation's criteria and indicators where a total of 88 activities had been identified to fully achieve sustainable forest management, he added.

"Of this, 64 activities have been considered priority while the remaining have been identified as the minimum required to achieve sustainable forest management by the year 2000," he said.

The four-day conference was attended by 100 participants representing science and policy specialists from various countries like Australia, Canada Switzerland, Cameroon, Venezuela, Finland, United States, Indonesia, Colombia and Netherlands.

The goal of the conference is to contribute to the development of objective, systematic and scientifically-based standards for certification of forestry operations. -- BERNAMA

DAB SVR