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Forests

MALAYSIA COMMITTED TO TROPICAL RAIN FOREST CONSERVATION

MELAKA, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is committed to the conservation of 50 per cent of tropical rain forests in the country, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today.

He said this was in accordance with a directive by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Law said that although tropical rain forests cover only six per cent of the Earth, it accounted for almost half of the wildlife species in the world.

Malaysia had been among countries in the forefront to ensure the greening of the Earth and to prevent extinction of wildlife species, he said when opening an international symposium on Galliformes, here.

The text of his speech was read out by the director-general of the Wildlife and National Parks Department, Musa Nordin.

Some 150 participants from 21 countries -- the United States, Canada, Russia, Australia, Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Britain, Nepal, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Taiwan, China, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia -- are attending the three-day symposium.

Law said that at present, environment impact assessment reports were required for all development projects in the country in line with the government's efforts to protect the environment.

He said that more forest reserve areas were being gazetted in the country to maintain the greenery.

In Sarawak, he said, the state planned to increase its forest reserve area from four million hectares to seven million hectares.

Sarawak had also set up six national parks in the state, covering 78,000 hectares, and three wildlife sanctuaries, covering 174,693 hectares.

-- BERNAMA

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