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Let us be `all for fish', says Koh

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GOVERNMENTS, agencies, and academic and research organisations involved in fish research and production worldwide have been urged to forge smart partnerships and synergy towards ensuring the success of the "Fish for All" initiative.

"We need to be All for Fish to achieve the aims of Fish for All," said Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, in calling for close collaboration and networking in the sustainable management and global production of fish.

He was speaking at the launch of the "Fish for All" summit hosted by the WorldFish Centre, attended by over 200 participants from 40 countries at the Equatorial Hotel.

The "Fish for All" initiative is aimed at reversing the global decline in living aquatic resources and finding ways through the promotion of sustainable development and environmentally sound management, to restore the livelihood, food and income of those who use and depend on fish.

Present were "Fish for All" Steering committee chairman Prof M.S. Swaminathan of India, World Bank vice-president Dr Ian Johnson who is also Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) chairman, and WorldFish Centre director-general Dr Meryl Williams.

Koh said the "Fish for All" initiative was keenly supported by the Malaysian Government which had donated a parcel of land for use as the global headquarters of the WorldFish Centre.

He added that the Malaysian Government's commitment was also clear from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's acceptance of an invitation to be one of the 12 members of the initiative's global steering committee.

Meanwhile, Koh said the State Government had set up a Marine Biotech Initiative committee which he personally chairs, to promote co-operation and networking among three fish research bodies based in Penang.

They are the Universiti Sains Malaysia marine biology division, the WorldFish Centre and the National Fisheries Research Institute at Batu Maung.

"We are confident that with these three important academic and research centres based here, we have the right ingredients to make Penang a centre for the `Fish for All' initiative," he added.

Besides the day-long summit, an open day to be held at the WorldFish Centre from 2pm to 5pm today includes public talks as well as story telling sessions and an art competition for children.