

Collaboration to protect Sabah endangered species

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KOTA KINABALU: Yayasan Sabah Group and Sabah Environmental Trust (SET) are stepping up efforts in protecting and managing endangered species in the Danum Valley-Maliau Basin-Imbak Canyon (DaMal) Rainforest Complex.

This commitment stems from a collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) inked between the two parties on Friday at the Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC).

Prior to this, Yayasan Sabah Group and SET, and the Sabah Forestry Department previously have long collaborated through the DaMal: Patrolling (Enforcement & Monitoring) initiative to monitor and protect wildlife.

The collaboration addresses poaching and illegal encroachment in DaMal Rainforest Complex through a MoU signed on Oct 24, 2017.

According to the director of Yayasan Sabah Group cum Executive Chairman of Innoprise Corporation Sdn Bhd, Dato' Sri Haji Gulamhaidar @ Yusof bin Khan Bahadar, the latest MoU will expect to inaugurate another collaboration between Yayasan Sabah Group and SET in monitoring and protecting endangered wildlife in DaMal Rainforest Complex.

The main focus of the MoU is to support research and education related to the environment in the area.

"Generally, in ensuring the perpetuity of the forests under Yayasan Sabah Group's custody, we have set aside five areas for conservation, namely Danum Valley, Maliau Basin, Imbak Canyon, Silam Coast and Sungai Taliwas. As such, it is appropriate for the



Gulamhaidar (left) and Dr Rahimatsah show the signed Memorandum of Understanding between Yayasan Sabah Group and SET.

Yayasan Sabah Group to be actively involved in this effort to substantiate the cooperation established with SET over the years," he added.

Gulamhaidar also said the details of the MoU are synonymous with the Third Thrust of the Sabah Maju Jaya Development Plan (SMJ) 2021-2025 initiative led by the Sabah Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Hajiji bin Haji Noor which covers the commitment of the Sabah State Government in preserving the environment while promoting green economic growth.

"I am confident this MoU will signify DaMal in the eyes of the world and will further stimulate the Sabah State Government's efforts in obtaining recognition of our natural treasures as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites," he added.

He said all efforts must be made to ensure that preservation of the natural treasure continues.

"All parties must support

the efforts to address environmental issues.

"Environmental management and conservation, especially in Sabah, are implemented in a sustainable development context involving economic development and social and environmental protection.

"Sustainable development cannot be achieved if one does not move in tandem to achieve this objective.

"Environmental conservation is an effort that needs to be implemented continuously and requires the mutual support of all parties.

"The natural treasures of DaMal that we have today are a trust that we need to preserve for future generations," he said.

In his reciprocal speech, SET Chief Executive Officer Dr Haji Rahimatsah Amat said, "To further strengthen the efforts made by SET in providing supports for the monitoring and enforcement project, SET very much welcome this cooperation for the sustainability of conservation areas under the

supervision of the Yayasan Sabah Group.

"At the initial stage, this study will be conducted in Maliau Basin Conservation Area and will focus on Bornean Banteng and Bornean Elephant species. Prof Dr Abdul Hamid Ahmad of Institute For Tropical Biology and Conservation (UMS), who is also an expert in wildlife, will lead the study as the Principal Investigator," added Dr Rahimatsah.

Hopefully, with this study, the understanding of habitats, behaviours, and threats to wildlife, especially Bornean Banteng and Bornean Pygmy Elephant, will increase and assist in providing further plans and strategies in conserving wildlife which is now the main natural treasure of Sabah," he said.

Gulamhaidar also expressed his hope that the research will involve more Yayasan Sabah Group staff specialising in Bornean Banteng and Bornean Pygmy Elephant wholesomely involving officers or rangers.

"This is important in ensuring that the initiative achieves its objectives and equipping staff with capacity development, enhancing awareness, and knowledge, thus increasing staff intellectual development.

"In view that the Maliau Basin Strategic Management Plan will end in 2023, I hope all the data obtained from the study will be beneficial for the reviewing of the management plan," he said.

The MoU was signed for Yayasan Sabah Group by Gulamhaidar and Yayasan Sabah Corporate Secretary, Hanafiah Diman while SET was represented by Dr Rahimatsah and its chairman, Datuk Verus Aman Sham.