

UCAPAN PERASMIAN

YBHG. PROF. DATUK DR. MOHD HARUN ABDULLAH

NAIB CANSOLOR

**SEMPENA PELANCARAN ELEPHANT SKELETON MODEL, IBTP
UMS**

**8 MARCH 2017 | 9.00 AM | INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL
BIOLOGY CONSERVATION, UMS**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

**Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh
Salam Sejahtera, Salam Negaraku Malaysia, Salam
EcoCampus, and very Good Morning**

Salutations

1. Representative from Consular of Japan
2. Mr. Augustine Tuuga, Director of Sabah Wildlife Department /
(En Peter Malim (Wakil Pengarah JHLS))
3. Mr. Hattori Hiroyuki, Chief Advisor JICA-SDBEC

4. Pegawai-pegawai Utama Universiti
5. Ketua-ketua Jabatan
6. Ladies and gentlemen

It is a privilege to be here this morning to launch this magnificent exhibition, "*Tagas-Borneo Pygmy Elephant Skeleton*" at the Galeri BORNEENSIS, Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation. First and foremost, I would like to congratulate Prof. Dr. Charles S. Vairappan and his team for successfully organizing this project. I am sure it has taken great dedication and hard work to create this magnificent exhibition.

A special gratitude also to Sabah Wildlife Department, JICA-SDBEC, and Dr. Hiroshi Sawamura for making this exhibition a reality. Congratulation to all!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At present, the Borneo elephant is found only on the island of Borneo, that is, in the Eastern and Central Sabah, as well as the extreme North of Indonesian Kalimantan.

The range of wild elephant in Sabah and Kalimantan seems to have expanded very little in the past 100 years despite access to suitable habitat elsewhere on Borneo. It was speculated that the distribution of wild elephants on Borneo may be limited by the occurrence of natural mineral sources. The population size of Bornean elephant is estimated to be 2,040 individuals in the five main elephant ranges in Sabah, namely, Tabin, Lower Kinabatangan, North Kinabatangan, Central Sabah and Ulu Kalumpang.

Presence of this elephant skeleton enhances the importance of Galeri Borneensis. I believe it was a well thought foresight to initiate and request for the remains of Tagas from Sabah Wildlife Department. I was told that it was Datuk Laurentius Ambu that supported this idea and approved the request. We are thankful to Sabah Wildlife Department for the support.

The present Director, Mr Augustine Tuuga is also very supportive and has assisted in many ways to enhance collaboration between Sabah Wildlife Department and UMS. I was told that this particular elephant is called Tagas, named after the Tagas River where it was rescued from plantation forest at Tagas-tagas, Beluran on the 10 January 2011. It was then translocated to Lok Kawi Wildlife Park but died on the 10th April 2011. The excavation was carried out in late 2015, and upon request to JICA-SDBEC,

Mr. Kazunobu Suzuki who was then the project chief made arrangements for Dr. Hiroshi Sawamura from Ashoro Museum of Paleontology, Hokkaido to offer his services in making our idea a reality. Dr. Sawamura made three trips, and this is his third trip and he has completed the task. I was also told that he has trained at least five of our technical staff and it is my intention to see them develop this skill and I am sure that will enable them to do more skeleton exhibits.

Dr. Sawamura, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your diligence and earnest support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a special occasion as this Borneo Pygmy Elephant skeleton is the first of such model available in Sabah, and it is hope that the skeleton would attract the interest of both students and the public to visit ITBC, UMS in the near future.

Realization of this project, is expected to enhance the awareness and education on the importance of biodiversity conservation with particular reference to the largest land mammal on Borneo Island.

I have no doubt that the addition of this exhibition to Galeri BORNEENSIS, ITBC will enhance the uniqueness of this collection center.

In conclusion, again I would like to applaud the partnership approach adopted by ITBC, by engaging Sabah Wildlife Department and JICA-SDBEC, to accomplish this project.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dengan Lafaz **Bismillahirrahmanirrahim**

It is my pleasure to declare this exhibition of “Tagas – Borneo Pygmy Elephant” open and I sincerely hope that the presence of this elephant skeleton will draw more people to visit Galeri BORNEENSIS.

Wabillahitaufiq Walhidayah

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullah Hiwabarakatuh.