

**Speech By**  
**Lt. Kol. Professor Datuk Dr. Kamaruzaman Hj. Ampon**  
**Vice Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sabah**  
**on the occasion of**  
**Seminar on Societal adaptation on tropical forest disturbances in Borneo**

**Jointly organized by**  
**School of International Tropical Forestry**  
**Universiti Malaysia Sabah**

**and**

**Center for Ecological Research**  
**Kyoto University**

**4th August 2008**

---

Thank you very much to Master of Ceremony

**BISMILLAHIRRAHMANIRRAHIM**

Alhamdulillah...

Prof. Dr. Kanehiro Kitayama, of Centre of Ecological Research, Kyoto University  
Assoc. Prof Dr Mahmud Hj Sudin, Dean of School of International Tropical  
Forestry, UMS cum the Chairman of the Organizing committee of the seminar

Dr. Mulyanto Darmawan of Bakosurtanal, from Indonesia  
Delegates from overseas,  
Distinguished speakers, participants  
Datuk/Datin, Ladies & Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum WBK and Very good morning

--

1. It is indeed my pleasure and honor for UMS to host one of the series of seminars in collaboration with regional partners from Kalimantan (Indonesia), Brunei Darussalam, Sabah, Sarawak and Japan. As I was informed, this is the second seminar in the series of three planned seminars following the first one, held at Kyoto University on 13-14 December 2007.

2. The Center for Ecological Research, Kyoto University (CERKU) has dedicated to work on basic ecological research with the establishment of research station in Borneo, including in the Deramakot Forest Reserve, in central Sabah. This initiative should lead to greater cooperation with relevant local authorities, organizations, and educational institute, and further enhance relationship between regions in Borneo.
  
3. Since its establishment in 1996, The School of International Tropical Forestry (SITF), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) collaborates with the Sabah Forestry Department, Borneo Timber Sdn. Bhd., TSH Sdn. Bhd., Sabah Forestry Development Authority (SAFODA) to maximize our contributions to the development of the forestry sector in Sabah and the country as a whole. Accordingly, this cooperation strategy also provides excellent opportunities for our lecturers to conduct research on relevant and pressing forestry issues and problems. In the regional and international front, we have initiated academic collaboration with key educational institutions in the Asia-Pacific region and continue to utilize opportunities to expand our academic and research network including in events such as this.
  
4. Borneo is the focal point of this seminar specially referring to societal adaptation on tropical forest disturbances in the equatorial tropical region. This island used to attract interest from the international research community because of its importance as a biodiversity hotspot, its undisturbed forests, and rich culture of its multiethnic people. But, Borneo has experienced rapid development and extensive land conversions especially in the past 50 years. Now, researchers have to address challenging global issues that have started to affect local society and its environment.

5. Climate change, oil and food price crisis, increased consumer demand, and growing urban population are some of the major driving forces of land use change that is shared on developing Borneo. Land use change is now even affecting the most isolated rural communities. Most are taking drastic measure of leaving their birth place and abandoning traditional way of life for better access to daily necessity of food and energy. Local farmers have to explore various alternatives to sustain their livelihood and the productive capacity of their agriculture holdings. These are the so called societal adaptability that is taking place and contribute to the dynamics of land use.
  
6. We have a role to play in contributing and sharing information of land use change, and suggest methods and approaches for desirable societal changes in the tropical region. As for UMS, we have recently produced the UMS Strategic Plan documents to refine and enhance the quality of teaching and research. The focus is on human capital development and immediate agendas necessary to get the transformation underway. The strategies adopted will strengthen the five core institutional pillar of higher educational institutions (HEIs), namely: governance, leadership, academia, teaching and learning, research and development. The strategies and actions outlined are in line with the Ministry of Higher Education's (MOHE) seven broad based strategic thrusts (2007-2010) which are:
  - Widening access and enhancing equity
  - Improving the quality of teaching and learning
  - Enhancing research and innovation
  - Strengthening institutions of higher education
  - Intensifying internationalization
  - Enculturation of lifelong learning and
  - Reinforcing the Higher Education Ministry's Delivery System

7. I am happy to note that during this seminar there will be a signing of Joint Declaration between the Sch. Of Intn'l Tropical Forestry and Centre of Ecological Research, Univ. of Kyoto. This is indeed a good start to a further bigger step like an MoU. I am confident that the School of International Tropical Forestry is in the right position in this collaborative effort. The research mandate of the School is aimed at developing its scientific capacity to become a Centre of Excellence in the field of forestry research, and generating quality scientific knowledge,) and thus, effectively contributing to the local and regional forest sector development.
8. At this juncture, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Organizing Committee headed by Assoc. Prof Dr Mahmud Hj Sudin, the Dean of the Sch. Of Intn'l tropical Forestry and all his workforce, for the success in organizing the seminar. Thank you also for CERKU and the JSPS (Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science) for their helps rendered to UMS in this cooperation and in making the program a reality.
9. Finally, with "BISMILLAHIRAHMANNIRRAHIM" I hereby declare the seminar open. Have a fruitful discussion.

Terima kasih. Wabillahitaufik Wal hidayah..Assalamualikum WBK. Thank you.