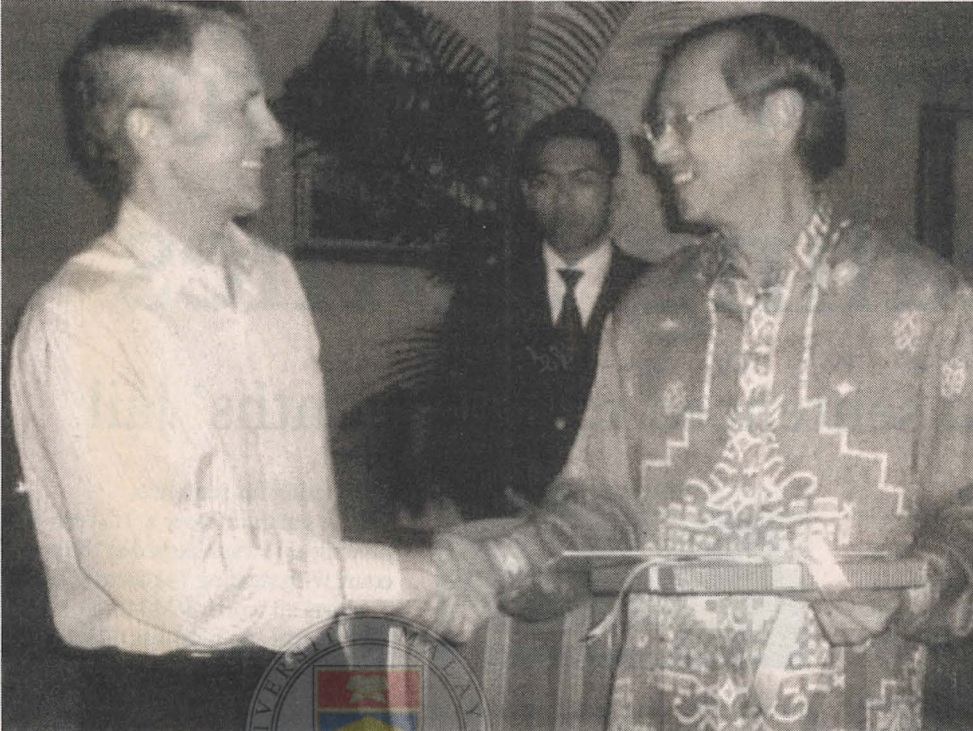


**DINNER FOR
AMBASSADOR ...
Deputy Chief
Minister and
Minister of
Tourism, Culture
and Environment
Tan Sri Datuk
Chong Kah Kiat
hosted a dinner for
the visiting
American
Ambassador,
Christopher J.
Lafleur, at a major
resort in Kota
Kinabalu on
Thursday.
This was
Lafleur's first visit
to Sabah since
posted to Malaysia
over a year ago.
Chong (right) is
seen shaking hands
with Lafleur.**



Sustainable Forest Management hails US aid

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KOTA KINABALU: An indication by the US Government to assist in preserving Malaysia's environment has received a warm welcome by the Sustainable Forest Management here.

Its head, Jeflus Sinajin, said with the US Government coming in to help preserve and conserve the nature resources in Malaysia, particularly Sabah and Sarawak, it definitely would further enhance the existing programmes.

"I hope they are serious and welcome their collaboration. It would be great and we can do more on forest management, and in a long run, we would be able to improve wildlife as well the State's biodiversity," he said.

To date, Jeflus said the financial assistance is mainly from the

European countries.

"Several people had even visited the Deramakot Forest Reserve and they were very impressed.

"For instance, the Tasmanian Member of Parliament who came for a visit earlier this week, had mooted the idea to work together as they were impressed by our forest management plans," said Jeflus.

He added that the Deramakot Forest Reserve had showed sustainable growth since its inception and it had been named as one of the best forest management planning programmes.

"The talk with the Tasmanian MP is probably just premature but they had shown interest to work and learn from us. We had been carrying out our programme in accordance to the principles given and Deramakot is a

model to the world," he explained.

On Thursday, US Ambassador to Malaysia Christopher Lafleur disclosed that they are looking at ways where their Government can help in maintaining and preserving the natural resources in the East Malaysian region.

He said that they had discovered some potential programmes after a meeting with the WWF Malaysia and other non-governmental organisations pertaining to nature conservation.

"Sabah and Sarawak, and Malaysia in general, contain the most important natural resources and heritage for mankind. It is your responsibility to protect and maintain it," he said after a public lecture on US-Malaysia Relations at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah.