



Abdul Rahman and the organisers and participants doing the 'soaring upwards' gesture, a UMS battle cry.

M'sia keeps pledge to have 50pc forest cover

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Sherell Jeffrey

KOTA KINABALU: Malaysia has maintained its pledge at the East Summit 1992 to have at least 50 per cent of land under forest cover with 55.2 per cent under various forms of protection, in 2015, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan.

He said current efforts include drawing up of the list of threatened species, paired with implementation of innovative methods.

"In short, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) principles are entrenched in every facet of our development carried out under the 11th Malaysia Plan.

"I hope this conference will foresee the birth of many more ideas to make Malaysia's future a sustainable one," he said when officiating at the International Conference on Social Transformation, Community and Sustainable Development 2017, here, Wednesday.

The three-day conference themed "Embracing Sustainable Development Goals" was jointly organised by Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) Ethnography and Development Research Unit, Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Heritage, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Terengganu and Imus Institute of Science and Technology, Philippines. It was attended by some 135 participants.

"I would like to congratulate UMS for leading the way in understanding and promoting public policy on sustainable development goal in Sabah.

"We congratulate Chief Minister Tan

Sri Musa Aman for leading the way in making sure that Sabah is one of the states, if not in the world, to be at the forefront of practising sustainable development growth in the country," he said.

"If you look back in the last few years since he (Musa) became Chief Minister, he was very instrumental in putting out SDGs and conservations, he is very strong on conservation and very proud

"This is not just about good policy, it is also about good business, because if we conserve our environment, it becomes a tourist attraction.

"People don't go and visit cities, big skyscrapers. They have those cities and buildings in their own country, but they want to go to places like Danum Valley, tropical forest, mangrove and what not.

"Because of the consistent conservation efforts made by the State government we are now reaping the benefits by having more tourists coming to Sabah.

"I was told that in China, Sabah is more well-known on its own, then other states of our federation and one of the reasons why they want to be here is to enjoy our greenery and environment, our sustainable development. Thank you, to the State Government," he said.

On another note, he also hoped UMS students would visit the World Urban Forum, a global gathering of urbanites, set to be held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in February next year.

"When I was the Minister of Housing and Local Government about two and a half years ago, I led a delegation to Colombia, South America, and we bid for

the right to host the World Urban Forum, one of the biggest conferences organised by the United Nations.

"When I was in Colombia there were about 22,000 participants over a period of one week, where we discussed about sustainable developments, how to make your cities better, how to make people live in the cities better, how do you make local governments prepare for disasters, and ensure sustainable self-sufficiency levels not only in food and security, but also utilities and insights.

"It was a very exciting conference and I decided to bid for it, and I like to announce here the Malaysia has won the bid last year and we will host the next World Urban Forum.

"I really hope that UMS students would come and visit and if you like to be a participant do let us know," he said, adding that volunteers are welcomed as well.

"We need thousands of volunteers to help as we estimated more than 30,000 participants coming over.

"This is one of the biggest conferences in the world and I am proud to say Malaysia will be the next host," he said.

Also present were UMS Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Heritage Dean Prof Dr Ismail Ibrahim who represented UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin, Conference Chairperson Prof Dr Roszman Hussin, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Prof Dr Ahmad Puad Mat Som and Imus Institute of Science and Technology, Philippines Associate Prof. Dr Karen Fernandez, among others.