

Headline	Mayor: Kuching to have botanical garden	Language	English
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Mayor: Kuching to have botanical garden

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Mohamad Atei Medaan, Kuching City North Commission (DBKU) Datuk Bandar

Geryl Ogilvy Ruekeith

KUCHING: A botanical garden will be built in Petra Jaya within the next few years.

Kuching City North Commission (DBKU) Datuk Bandar Mohamad Atei Medaan said yesterday that the state government had allocated more than 120 acres for the garden.

"DBKU has no problem with budget allocation from the government, but finding the right area is the key. We will work closely with the National Landscape Department (JLN) as they will develop the master plan for this.

"The garden must not be isolated and there will be other attractions surrounding it as part of the garden's purpose is to be a tourist attraction, nature conservation and centre for natural research and development," he said.

Atei said during the opening of the Urban Forestry Conference 2009 DBKU would set up a special unit with expertise in the maintenance of the garden upon its completion.

He added that the commission was also working with the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the International Union of Forest Research Organisation (IUFRO) on the project.

This was part of the state government's vision of a garden city to enhance quality of life in the city.

"Through this vision, DBKU has taken account the need for green conservation while delivering its prudent services for sustainable development in the city.

"As a manifestation to this commitment, the state

government has recently allocated more than 120 acres of prime land for the proposed botanical garden," he said.

Atei said the garden will be successfully established because other than the financial and infrastructural resources, Sarawak has more than 2,500 species of trees and plants ideal for the proposed garden.

Meanwhile, FRIM deputy director general of operations Dr Abdul Rahim Nik told a press conference later, "It takes time to develop a botanical garden. We need a lot of commitment from everybody and proper planning is the essence.

"From this conference, we hope to learn the steps needed in the implementation of this project. We will form a

structure and collaboration with Denmark through the Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning of the University of Copenhagen."

The three-day conference, themed 'Lessons for Sustainable Development', is the fourth series of meetings between FRIM and the Danish centre, with the first meeting held in 2004 in Denmark.

The conference touched on subjects such as awareness and educational methods for sustainable development, the challenges in sustainable urban development, and the practices, communications as well as conservation in urban forestry and park management.

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LET THE CONFAB BEGIN: Atei officially opens the conference as Rahim (left) and IUFRO Urban Forestry Unit coordinator Professor Cecil C Konijnendijk look on.