

Business

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AT the opening of the BoBW Conference are (from left) Noor Azlin Yahya Head of Urban Forestry & Environment Education Programme, Wilfred S Landung General Manager of Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod Director General of FRIM, Nancy Shukri, Mohd Atai Mayor DBKU, Professor Callie Loubser UNISA, Professor Peter Higgins University of Edinburgh and Professor Johann Dryer UNISA. PHOTO: KEVIN TAN

Green Issues now world's biggest concern

BY KEVIN TAN

KUCHING: Green and environmental issues have largely become the world's biggest concern, from the Rio World Summit to various environment related Protocol, to Copenhagen Accord and the upcoming meeting on climate change scheduled in Cancun, Mexico, said Minister of Natural Resources and environment YB Dato Sri Douglas Uggah Embas in his speech that was read out by Malaysian Forestry research and Development Board chairperson Nancy Shukri at the opening of the Best of Both Worlds Conference at the Kuching Hilton yesterday.

"Progress has been slow, unconvincing and literally stunted. Economic and financial crisis overtook the concern and focus on environmental matters and climate change has taken a back seat. I am not trying to be a pessimist nor an oracle of negativity, but I need you, the participants, the community and the people who can make the difference, to know the real situation and anticipate how you can further contribute toward helping

our environment," he added.

The Minister said that he had just returned from the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan where various issues related to biodiversity, conservation efforts and policies were discussed and deliberated at length by thousands of representatives from all over the world.

"It was a complex and arduous work, albeit a necessary one, to argue, resolve and to understand the concerns and challenges faced by the world community in supporting the biodiversity conservation and its sustainable utilisation. My Ministry has been spearheading policy and action-orientated works to tackle multiple issues related to the environment and biodiversity in Malaysia. Although we have many success stories that we are very proud to share, we too have our fair share of challenges and difficulties that are not only unique, but at times disheartening," he continued.

On the upcoming 16th Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun, Mexico which he is attending, the Minister said, "If the previous meeting held in Copenhagen is any indication, this meeting shall also be a very complicated and difficult meeting in looking for a convergence of views and commitment among the developed and the developing countries in mitigating and adapting to the climate change."

"In coming out with all inclusive and differentiated responsibility, each nation and its leaders have to be truthful, unbiased and not indulge in self interest or dis-serving action. Developing countries like Malaysia, should not be blamed or be handicapped from achieving its goal of development, though lopsided commitment and agreement. Developed countries should focus on the real issue, not just using economic and bureaucracy constraint as an excuse to fail in its targeted and agreed commitment. Malaysia has pledged a voluntary 40% reduction in carbon emission intensity by the year 2020 based on 2005 level during the meeting in Copenhagen, which I am proud to

mention, are on track and achievable," he continued.

"Through various ingenious and creative ways and means, we can mitigate and ease the burden of ruthless cycle of degradation and environmental devastation. Indeed, the government has consistently affirmed its commitment through various pledges and actions, not only from my Ministry but from our Prime Minister himself. Through creation of various components and agencies under the government, plus financial allocation under the 9th and 10th Malaysia Plan, we have embarked on critical projects and initiatives, but sometimes, the simplest way to contribute towards the environment is by tree planting and environmental education," he said.

On the Certificate in Environmental Education (CEE) programme to be implemented in 2011, he said it is envisaged to "fill in the gap" in Malaysia's training needs especially for pre-service and in-service teachers and environmental practitioners seeking to understand the environmental education and its applications in a broad manner.