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Environmental knowledge to help gauge awareness

KUCHING: Sarawak should evaluate the effectiveness of its environmental education programmes, said Planning and Resource Management Ministry deputy permanent secretary Datuk Len Talif Salleh.

He said findings from the assessment would be useful to gauge the environmental knowledge and awareness level among the programme participants and their perception towards environmental education.

"All this information will be pertinent for further improvement of environmental education activities in our crusade to produce environment stewards," he added in a speech at the opening of the "Best of Both Worlds" conference on effective environmental education for biodiversity conservation here yesterday.

His speech was read by Sarawak Forestry Corporation general manager Wilfred Landong.

About 100 participants, including teachers, are attending the three-day event jointly organised by Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and Sarawak Forestry Corporation.

The conference highlighted environmental education practices for biodiversity education through four themes. These were conservation education on flora and fauna, environmental education for sustainable lifestyle, methods for effective environmental education programmes and evaluation of education programmes.

Len Talif, who is Sarawak Forestry chief executive officer, said environmental education was one of the strategies used by the state authorities for environmental protection and

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DATUK LEN TALIF SALLEH

enhancement towards achieving sustainable development.

"Environmental issues, such as biodiversity and habitat loss, are complex. Thus environmental education is critical for a clear understanding of biodiversity and its ecological linkages as well as improving the capacity of people to address such issues."

He said environmental education should encompass raising awareness and acquiring new values, knowledge and skills which ultimately lead to changes in people's perception and attitude towards environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

Len Talif said, as the custodian of the state's forests, Sarawak Forestry aimed to be a recognised global leader in tropical forest conservation.

"We are entrusted with safe-guarding and managing the richness of Sarawak's biodiversity which comprises many species of animals, plants, fungi and other life forms in a sustainable manner," he added.