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# Four MOUs signed on forest conservation

ONG WEI LING

**KUCHING:** Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) will work closely with various state agencies and organizations in Sarawak on forestry conservation and research and development (R and D).

The institute has signed four Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara (DBKU), Sarawak Biodiversity Council, Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) and Borneo Biogahru Sdn. Bhd. respectively.

The MOU signing ceremony was held yesterday in conjunction with the opening of "Seminar Persekutuan Perkumpulan Wanita Sarawak (PPWS) 2011", which was officiated by the Minister in the Chief Minister's Department, Datin Fatimah Abdul Wahab, at the Sarawak Foundation's Community Education Centre here.

FRIM was tasked with organising the herbal exhibition themed

"Kelestarian Industri Herba Sarawak Melalui Teknologi dan Inovasi Terkini" at the two-day seminar to showcase the latest herbal research and development (R and D) activities, various herbal-based beauty and health care products and services as well as medicinal plants.

PPWS Chairperson, Nancy Haji Shukri, who heads FRIM's Malaysian Forestry Research and Development Board (MFRDB), has encouraged the institute to establish more collaborations and smart partnerships in the state to ensure mutual benefits and greater efficiency through joint R and D activities, sharing and exchanging of knowledge, expertise and resources; technology transfer as well as capacity building programmes.

Under the MOU between FRIM and DBKU, the two parties will conduct joint R and D programmes covering activities such as making an inventory of heritage trees in the DBKU area, addressing issues

related to tree health maintenance and assessments, and developing interpretive trails as a measure to conserve the natural heritage.

The collaboration is expected to enhance the management of ecotourism, urban forests as well as heritage trees in DBKU through improved practices.

Having an environment conducive to recreation is not only important for the people's well-being but also adds value in terms of education and tourism to the natural environment of the city.

This MOU will also benefit FRIM as it will provide a new research experience related to Kuching's urban biodiversity resources and cultural heritage.

The MOU between FRIM and Sarawak Biodiversity Council focuses on biodiversity development and bioprospecting. The scope of cooperation covers research and documentation of biodiversity, traditional knowledge documentation, research in herbal products devel-

opment, training, capacity building and technology transfer.

Borneo Biogahru is a local company interested in the production of gaharu oil essence base. The MOU covers R and D in gaharu oil extraction, setting up of karas plantation, inoculation of karas trees and product development.

Under the agreement, FRIM will provide consultancy and techni-

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cal support services in relation to gaharu oil extraction research, development of gaharu- based products and management of karas plantation.

The objective of the MOU between FRIM and SFC is to encourage and promote cooperation between the two parties in the natural forest management, establishment and management of

forest plantations, conservation of environment and generic resources, processing technologies of forest products, establishment and maintenance of forest and wood based industry database, and assessment of effective conservation education programmes, among others.

The MOU will provide an opportunity for both parties to learn from each other's experience.



**MINISTER** in Chief Minister's Office Datin Hajah Fatimah Abdullah (fourth from left) and PPWS Chairperson Nancy Haji Shukri (third from right) pose with the Director-General of FRIM, Dato' Dr. Abd Latif Mohmod (second from right), DBKU Director Haji Onn Haji Abdullah (second from left), Sarawak Biodiversity Council CEO Dr. Rita Manurung (third from left), Borneo Biogahru's Executive Director Soraya Abdullah (extreme left) and Sarawak Forestry Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer, Datu Len Talif Salleh (extreme right) after the signing of the MOUs.