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New tool for sustainable forest planning

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tropical production forest managers can now integrate conservation of biodiversity into forest planning with a new tool set launched yesterday.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas said the Perak Tool Set, which is the first of its kind in the world, is a relevant planning tool that would result in sustainable forestry.

"The Perak Tool is the answer to a long-time quest by decision-makers like me to have a simple tool set that provides an option of improved forest harvesting and a standard method to assess the

impact of forest harvesting on biodiversity," he said before opening the Regional Seminar on Improved Tools and Methods for Integrating Biodiversity Conservation into Forest Planning.

The tool set was developed in the Termenggor Forest Reserve under a conservation project by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) headed by the Ministry.

It is a system of internet-based forest management tools for integrating conservation into forest planning and comprises four kits that can be used together or separately.

Perak Minister Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said the state government would look towards utilising the tool set in the

management of its forests.

"I invite all Malaysians and fellow Asean members to share and tap into this knowledge bank."

Uggah said implementation of the tool set would begin through the Forestry Department.

"To meet the ministry's aim of making sure 60% of Malaysia's land area remains as forest land from the current 56.4%, we need such tools that will allow us to continue with development and also conserve the environment," he said, adding the Perak Tool would also be useful to other countries with tropical forests.

The tool set was developed with funding from the United Nations Development Programme and the International Timber Trade Organisation.