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EXPERTISE: FRIM to lend a hand in rehabilitating idle plots affected by development

ILI LIYANA MOKHTAR

THE Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) is offering its expertise to rehabilitate idle land and forests affected by development.

Its director-general Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod said government agencies, corporate bodies and the community were welcome to consult FRIM as it had long been engaged in efforts to rehabilitate and restore degraded forests, problematic soil and mining areas.

"Part of FRIM's main campus in Kepong was once barren as a result of tin mining, but through the commitment and concerted efforts of many, it is now a green lung amidst rapidly developing surrounding areas.

"It is also now a world renowned site for eco-tourism with national heritage status," he said in his welcoming remarks at the opening of

the International Symposium on Reclamation, Rehabilitation and Restoration Towards a Greener Asia, here, yesterday.

Latif noted that FRIM had successfully rehabilitated an ex-tin mining area in Bidor Perak.

"It took us 15 years and our researchers planted both indigenous and exotic timber species to turn it into a man-made forest."

He said despite better awareness among the public of the importance of forests and their ecosystems, the number of forests continued to dwindle.

"It is our duty to ensure that the future generations will be able to enjoy the benefits and wonders offered by these forests."

Earlier, Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas said from the 1970's to 2010, the forestry de-

partment of Peninsular Malaysia has managed to restore 33,105 hectares of forests.

"When the tsunami hit the region in 2004, the department launched a conservation programme for planting mangroves and other suitable species along the national coastlines.

"Through this programme, a total of 5,516ha exposed to coastal erosion had been restored in a span of five years," he said in his opening speech which was read by Latif.

Uggah said the FRIM director-general also shared a promising development regarding the tree-planting campaign which started in 2010.

It was estimated that by the end of the campaign, 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide would have been absorbed by these trees.