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Uggah: Tree-planting campaign exceeds initial target of 26 million

KUCHING: A nationwide campaign spearheaded by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry has seen 28.8 million trees planted since its launch two years ago.

Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas said this surpassed the campaign's initial target of planting 26 million trees by 2014.

"The 26 million trees represent the estimated 26 million population of the country in 2010, thus targeting a 1:1 tree-to-citizen ratio and some 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide to be absorbed.

"Part of the project has been carried out in cities like Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur," he said at the opening of the Urban Forestry Conference 2012 here yesterday.

His speech was read by the ministry's deputy secretary-general Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohamad Nor.

Uggah called for the campaign to be extended here and cities in other states, adding that more efforts should be made to plant suitable indigenous species.

He said the campaign was in line with the Government's efforts to ensure that at least 50% of the country had forest cover, according to Malaysia's commitment made at the Earth

To make the most of our precious urban green resources, a strategic approach to the planning and management of green areas is crucial. It requires an understanding of the relationship between urban green spaces and other functional urban spaces.

— DATUK SERI DOUGLAS UGGAH EMBAS

Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Uggah also said urban forests and green areas contributed significantly in providing urban dwellers with better lives.

"These green pockets assist in ameliorating damage caused by rapid development in our cities, such as improving microclimatic conditions, soil conditions, the biodiversity of urban flora and hydrological cycles," he said.

As such, he said urban forests and parks

needed to be managed like natural forests because they are also a valuable heritage to be left for future generations.

"To make the most of our precious urban green resources, a strategic approach to the planning and management of green areas is crucial. It requires an understanding of the relationship between urban green spaces and other functional urban spaces."

Uggah added that cooperation and communication among the relevant authorities and stakeholders were also important in ensuring environmental sustainability.

He said urban dwellers should be given space to participate in decision-making of policies related to urban greening.

"Public participation, consultation and partnership with stakeholders and communities should be an integral part of the framework."

The conference was organised by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Kuching City North Commission and Sarawak Forestry Corporation.

It was supported by the Sarawak Convention Bureau, International Union of Forest Research Organisations and International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration.