

Headline	FRIM studying legal aspect to protect Orang Asli's traditional knowledge rights		
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FRIM Deputy Director General (Operations) Dr. Norini Haron speaking to reporters at a press conference.

BY HARUN JAU

KUCHING: Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) which is currently doing a project to document the traditional knowledge of the Orang Asli in Peninsula Malaysia has discovered four species of wild plants and trees that have multiple potentials for commercialization.

Its deputy director-general (operations) Dr Norini binte Harun disclosed that the four species were among the 10 species tested for their medicinal values. "We tested about 10 selected species and we discovered that four have multiple potentials for commercialization", she disclosed at a press conference after officiating the National Conservation Symposium 2013 at Riverside Majestic Hotel here yesterday.

She said that FRIM was now focusing on one of the potential species that had been discovered to have multiple potentials for commercialization. "I can't reveal

that, it is not a fruit tree, it's a wild species of tree and it is a big tree," she said when asked by reporters on the particulars of the species.

Noraini disclosed that the species had never been done before in the R&D adding that it was a new discovery which had vast potential for commercialization.

She said this year they would try to come up with the prototype of that species. "The prototype is something that you prototype for product development. From thereon we are going to look for partners to commercialize that species, she said.

"We are also working towards developing legal aspects to protect the Orang Asli's rights to their traditional knowledge," she said.

The project which came under the sponsorship of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations was to ensure the natives would not

become bio-piracy victims.

She also stressed that unlike any other project, the community's permission had to be sought before undertaking the project.

She disclosed that there were 18 sub-ethnic group of Orang Asli in West Malaysia and to date FRIM had managed to document the traditional knowledge of 11 sub-ethnic groups and another two would be documented next year.

The project she added was not only documenting on the traditional knowledge of the Orang Asli but also giving them capacity building and at the moment FRIM was just doing a small part of their traditional knowledge.

Meanwhile, Kuching North City Commission (DBKU) Mayor Datuk Abang Abdul Wahab Abang Julai disclosed that DBKU was going to work very closely with FRIM with its Clean, Beautiful and Safe (CBS) City Programme.

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FRIM Deputy Director General (Operation) Dr. Norini Haron (right) taking a closer look at the traditional Iban 'Pua Kumbu' at the exhibition while being briefed by Belalang Bajat from Borneo Oricraft Co.



FRIM Deputy Director General (Operation) Dr. Norini Haron talking to DBKU Mayor Datuk Hj Abang Wahap Abang Julai (left) while Datuk Rashid Khan and Wan Zahiri Wan Yaacob (right) listen. PHOTOS: RAMIDI SUBARI