

Headline	Smaller forest revenue for greener future		
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Smaller forest revenue for greener future

SEPILOK: Sabah lost a great deal of forest revenue to churn a sustainable future in the forest sector.

According to Sabah Forestry Department Director Datuk Sam Mannan, Sabah accumulated only a mere three per cent last year from what it generated in 1979, thanks to the implementation of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) model forest.

“Our forest revenue peaked in 1979 with RM1.1 billion, which is equivalent to RM5.8 billion in today’s value. Last year’s revenue was approximately RM175 million.

“I think that shows how very serious we (Sabah) are about sustainability,” he said during the launching of Best of Both Worlds 2015, an international conference on environmental education.

Sam attributed the smaller forest revenue to the SFM, which was officially adopted in 1997, following the success of the SFM model forest, Deramakot Forest Reserve.

He said the department, which was established in 1989 with the aid from the German Agency for Technical Aid (GTZ), had faced a “herculean task” of getting the industry to change its mindsets “on what constituted sustainability”.

Sam said the Government was also shocked when they informed that a decline in revenue from the forest sector will happen if the SFM was implemented.

“In this context, the forestry industry in Sabah has had its fair share of trials and tribulations in implementing SFM.

We have solved the most fundamental problems and are now facing new ones—not as tough as the earlier ones but challenging nonetheless,” he said.

Meanwhile, Sam said he could see a similar goal into its SFM effort and environmental education forwarded by the participants at the Best of Both Worlds.

He noted both SFM and education focused on sustainable future; both focuses on the daunting task of educating stakeholders on the concept of sustainability, and took a long time to see positive results.

He, however, highlighted that all work can be done if it’s done through cooperation.

“Do not work in isolation. We do not have the monopoly of great ideas. No matter how much we can do by ourselves on the state and national level, whether it be for sustainable forest management or for environmental education, it is never enough,” he said.

Meanwhile, more than 13 participants from South Africa, Brazil, Nepal, Australia, Malaysia and the United States are expected to share their success stories on breaking down barriers to achieve success in their environmental goals.

Organisers of the Best of Both Worlds this year have set the theme “Ensuring Effective Delivery for a Sustainable Future” and has chosen the Rainforest Discovery Centre as the venue this year.

The event is hosted by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and the Sabah Forestry Department.

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Sam posing with the speakers and participants.