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Green project sees blooming success

26ha of forested land handed over to Perhilitan in first-of-its-kind Malaysia-Japan initiative

AEON Co (M) Bhd's commitment to diversify forest trees on 26ha of land in Paya Indah Wetlands has been successfully fulfilled.

Known as "Bukit Aeon", the land was handed over to the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan).

Initiated on Sept 15, 2004 as a Malaysia-Japan Friendship Forest project, it is the first of its kind and saw the successful planting of 30,000 forest trees by 3,000 volunteers from government agencies, schoolchildren, local community, university students, Aeon's business partners and staff as well as Japanese volunteers.

To-date, the land has more than 60,000 trees of various species.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jeyakumar, who witnessed the handover said: "Initiatives such as these play an important role in conserving Mother Nature and while the results are not seen overnight, our future generations

will be thankful."

He said the project stood as a testament to Malaysian-Japanese relations.

Also present were ministry secretary-general Datuk Dr Tan Yew Chong and Perhilitan director-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim.

Aeon managing director Shinobu Washizawa said the Malaysia-Japan Friendship Forest project was one of Aeon's most successful green projects.

"For almost 15 years, we have endeavoured to grow this forested area to provide a sustainable living environment for future generations at the Paya Indah Wetlands.

"I am optimistic that this project will be well-maintained by Perhilitan," said Shinobu.

He added that the project would always be a benchmark for other Tree Planting for Biodiversity pillars, such as the Reforestation and Rehabilitation of Firefly Breeding Areas in Kuala Selangor, Tree



Dr Xavier (third from right) being briefed by FRIM officer Dr Ang Lai Hoe (second from right) during a tour of Bukit Aeon following the handover ceremony in Dengkil, Selangor. With them is Shinobu (right).

Planting for the Diversification of Trees at Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in Bidor, Perak, and the Tree Planting for the Reforestation and Rehabilitation of Orang Utan in Lahad Datu, Sabah.

Dr Xavier said: "We are honoured to continue maintaining this heritage green project that symbolises the commitment towards preserving nature, as well as the friendship between Malaysia and Japan."

Aeon's corporate social responsibility in tree planting and Hometown Forest Programme was launched in 1991 at Aeon Mall, Melaka.

To-date, Aeon has planted more than 500,000 trees in Malaysia.