

**United Nations Development Programme**



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## **Opening Remarks**

### **National Workshop on Improved Tools and Methods for Integrating Biodiversity Concerns into Forest Planning**

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FRIM, Kuala Lumpur

Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Joseph Kurup,  
Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia

Yang Berbahagia, Dato' Dr. Abdul Latif Mohmod, Director-General, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia,

Distinguished guests

Members of the media

Good morning and a warm welcome.

On behalf of UNDP Malaysia, I would like to thank the Honourable Minister, YB Tan Sri Joseph Kurup, for joining us this morning at this **National Workshop on Improved tools and methods for integrating biodiversity concerns into Forest Planning.**

I would also like to welcome all participants from government agencies, the private sector and civil society to this valuable workshop. Your presence here indicates your commitment to the management and conservation of the rich biodiversity of Malaysia. UNDP always encourages active policy and best practice dialogues like this one as a platform to ensure better engagement of the various stakeholders who are likely to be involved with the eventual implementation of government policies.

I would also like to sincerely thank Dato' Dr. Abdul Latif Mohmod, Director-General, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia for his support to UNDP's projects and also wish to express my appreciation to the entire team of the UNDP/GEF Project on Conservation of Biological Diversity through Improved Forest Planning Tools.

As you know, Malaysia is a signatory to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The main objectives of the CBD are three fold; namely conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of the global biodiversity. While these objectives may seem straightforward, they have been very difficult to implement. This is primarily due to the fact that biodiversity is part of a larger ecosystem which interacts with human beings.

The UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment assessed the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being. Between 2001 to 2005, the Millennium Assessment involved the work of more than 1,360 experts worldwide. Their findings provide a state-of-the-art scientific appraisal of the condition of and trends in the world's ecosystems and the services they provide, as well as the scientific basis for action to conserve and use them sustainably. For example, on a local and national scale, relatively limited information exists about the status of many ecosystem services and even less information is available on the economic value of non-marketed services. Moreover, the costs of the depletion of these services are rarely tracked in national economic accounts. Basic global data on the extent and trends

in different types of ecosystems and land use are also surprisingly scarce. Models used to project future environmental and economic conditions have limited capability for incorporating ecological “feedbacks,” including nonlinear changes in ecosystems, or behavioral feedbacks such as learning that may take place through the adaptive management of ecosystems.

More specifically, the third finding of the Biodiversity Assessment indicates that improved valuation techniques and information on ecosystem services show that although many individuals benefit from the actions and activities that lead to biodiversity loss and ecosystem change, the costs of such changes borne by society as a whole is often higher. Even in instances where our knowledge of benefits and costs is incomplete, the use of the precautionary approach may be warranted especially when the costs associated with ecosystem change are high or the changes irreversible.

Herein lies the reason why we are all here today. The UNDP/GEF Project on Conservation of Biological Diversity through Improved Forest Planning Tools will provide decision makers with better tools which should enable them to make more informed decisions on the trade-off between conservation and using the forest ecosystem for various economic activities.

UNDP hopes that the lessons learnt from this project will both provide the tools and enhance capacities of both the federal and state governments to continue their efforts to use, manage and conserve the valuable forest ecosystem of Malaysia. In this context, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the State government of Perak and FRIM for their commitment to manage the forest ecosystem of Malaysia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNDP Malaysia will continue to support environmental projects through our energy and environment programme. This is in support of and consistent with the government of Malaysia’s efforts to effectively protect, conserve and manage the environment in the country. We are already supporting or implementing various projects to protect the biodiversity of Malaysia and address climate change issues and now have a long and credible history of doing so. As part of this, we actively engage our main partners and are assisting them in their efforts to provide valuable policy inputs into the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan which is still at an early design stage.

In conclusion, let me thank all the participants who have come here in spite of their busy schedules for their presence today. I wish all of you fruitful discussions during the Workshop.

Thank you.