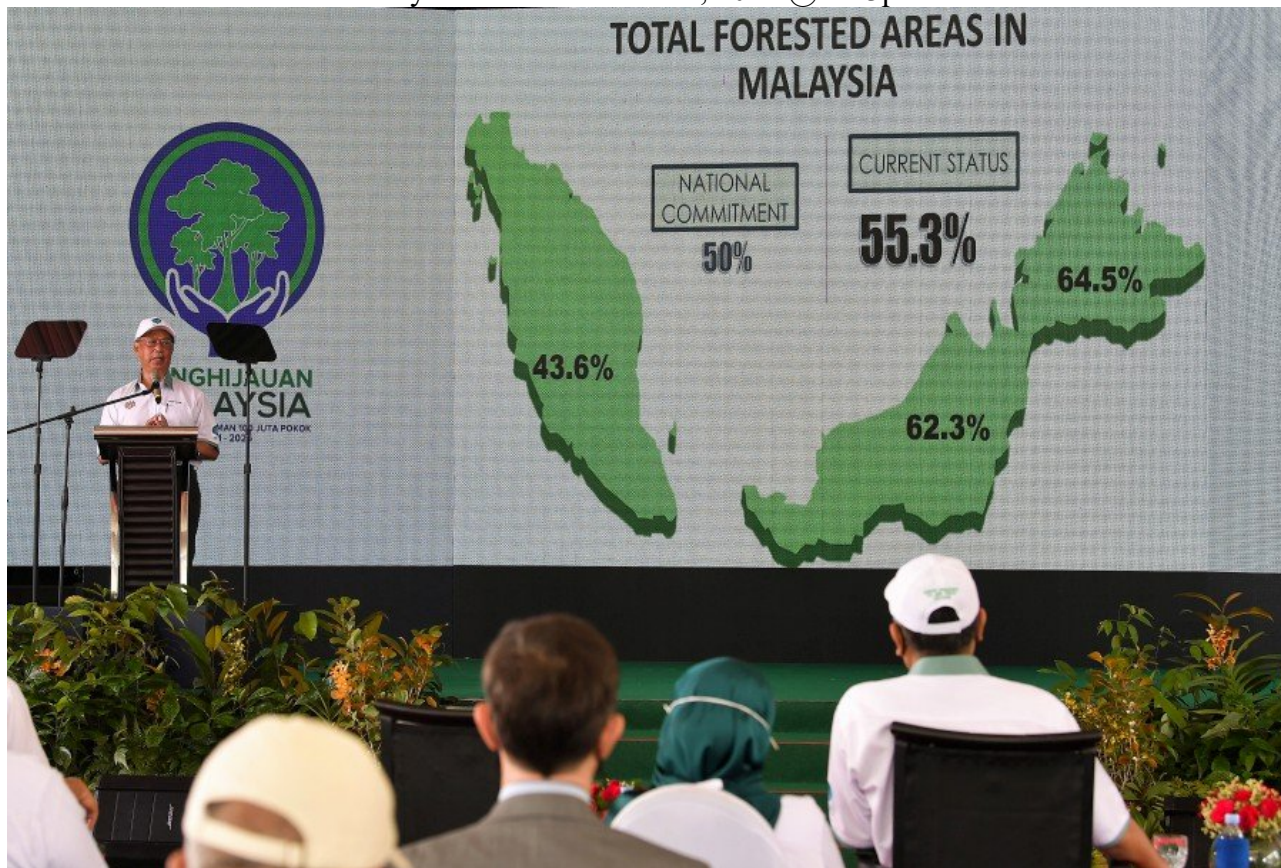




Muhyiddin: Malaysian Forestry Policy unites all states in forestry conservation efforts

By Bernama - March 21, 2021 @ 4:13pm nst



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin delivers his speech at the Malaysian Forestry Policy launching ceremony in a conjunction with the 2021 National International Forest Day Celebration at the Kepong Botanic Garden, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM). -BERNAMA pic

KUALA LUMPUR: Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the Malaysian Forestry Policy, launched today, will witness all states coming together on the country's forest.

The Prime Minister said all states have agreed to adopt the policy which outlined a clear direction for the forestry sector in facing new challenges at domestic and international levels at the 78th National Land Council (MTN) meeting held on Jan 29.

"I would like to emphasise that the Malaysian Forestry Policy is our shared policy. We must all act and play a more active role as conservation agents and drivers of the country's socio-economic development.

"I hope that the joint efforts of the federal and state governments in implementing the five objectives of the Malaysian Forestry Policy will continue to be strong, to achieve the desired targets," he said.

He said this in his speech before launching the Malaysian Forestry Policy in conjunction with the 2021 National level International Day of Forests here today.

Also present was the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Datuk Seri Dr Shamsul Anuar Nasarah, with the virtual attendance of menteri besar and chief ministers.

Muhyiddin also said that in order to achieve the goal of becoming a developed country, development is inevitable, but in this case, he stressed that the government is very serious in managing forests responsibly and sustainably in implementing conservation programmes.

"As a responsible and caring government, various efforts were taken to fulfill the commitment pledged during the Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil by mainstreaming biodiversity management in national development.

"Of the total forested areas in Malaysia, only 1.7 per cent are degraded forest areas. Since 2016, a total of 1,859 hectares of degraded areas have been reforested with an allocation of RM152.82 million," he said.

The Prime Minister said the cost of maintaining and preserving the country's forest areas which cover 55.3 per cent or 18.27 million hectares of the country's land area is enormous and about RM6 billion is needed for the purpose.

He said towards this direction, various special financial instruments were created including the National Conservation Trust Fund for Natural Resources, Forest Development Trust Fund under the state governments in Peninsular Malaysia and the latest, the Malaysia Forest Fund (MFF) which was established last year.

Muhyiddin said through MFF, the country is expected to receive USD100 million (RM400 million) in the next seven years which would be channeled to state governments for the conservation of forest including social forest to raise the socio-economic standard of Orang Asli and the local communities.

As a record, he said based on the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report, Malaysia is among 25 developing countries which have high forest cover and low deforestation activities.

The Prime Minister also expressed his appreciation of the commitment of state governments in gazetting sensitive environmental areas as permanent forest reserve, protected areas, Wildlife Reserve and areas of international interest.

At the same time he also called on state governments to step up efforts to gazette and maintain forest areas as Central Forest Spine (CFS) and Heart of Borneo (HoB).

"The Fourth National Physical Plan (RFN4) which is being finalised also emphasises on CFS to ensure the continuity of forest landscape through the setting up of new ecological corridor.

"This approach is able to reduce conflict between humans and wildlife as well as to enable the free movement of wildlife especially national iconic species which are facing extinction," he said.

On threatened species, Muhyiddin called on state governments to gazette the habitat areas of Malayan Tigers as permanent forest reserve or wildlife reserve in their respective states.

He expressed his concerns that if extraordinary actions were not taken now, the country is bound to lose its iconic species such as the Malayan Tiger forever.

Earlier, Muhyiddin also planted a Resak tree or scientifically called *Vatica Yeechongii* which is named after the late Chan Yee Chong (1946-2013), a forest tree identification expert as a symbol of launching the policy and the national level International Day of Forests 2021. – Bernama