



Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources

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Minister of Industry & Primary Resources

THE 2ND ASFN CONFERENCE 2011

FORESTS FOR PEOPLE:

***“The Role of Social Forestry in REDD+ and Forest
Conservation”***

21-23 June 2011

Tkt 7, Goldstone Ballroom, Centrepoint Hotel

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

Bismillah Hirahmaneer Raheem

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarrakatuh and a pleasant good morning to all.

At the outset, I would like to convey:

- Firstly, my special thanks to the Organizer for inviting me as the Guest of Honour and to officiate the launching of the 2nd ASEAN Social Forestry Network [ASFN] Conference which will be held starting from today until Thursday;
- Secondly, to congratulate everybody, especially the Organizing Committee, ASFN Secretariat and the Swiss Development Corporation [SDC] for initiating this Conference;
- Thirdly, to express our appreciation for being part of this collaboration and to host the Conference here in Brunei Darussalam; and
- Last but no mean least, I would like to congratulate ASFN for its work and remarkable achievements since its establishment in 2005.

As we all know, the ASEAN Social Forestry Network has promoted the recognition of the role of people who are living in and around the forests in forest management to attain poverty reduction and environmental goals. It also has helped to strengthen collaborations amongst forestry stakeholders in achieving sustainable forest management whilst improving the welfare of forest communities.

Moving on to the Conference today. This year's theme **"Forests for People: The Role of Social Forestry in REDD+ and Forest Conservation"** signifies our commitment and support towards the initiative taken by the United Nations in declaring the year 2011 as the International Year of Forest. More importantly it highlights the important role of the people and forests through social forestry initiative in mitigating climate change issues. We understand the increasing global greenhouse gases emissions, estimated around 20%, as a result of deforestation and forest degradation through agricultural expansion, infrastructure developments,

illegal logging, and forest fires. At the same time, we value the capabilities of our forests to absorb greenhouse gases, estimated at around 32 billion tons of carbon dioxide, from the atmosphere and store it on what we called forest carbon stock.

Our concern goes beyond forests. While we maintain the contribution of forests to climate change, we look into the welfare of forest communities and consider them partners in mitigating forest degradation and the effective implementation of sustainable forest management. We also intend to discuss available initiatives like the REDD+ and its procedures in order to access resources in supporting our works in the field.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brunei Darussalam is considered among the countries with high forest cover. With a population of less than half a million and economic stability at hand, utilization

pressure on the country's forests is at a minimum. As such, only few local communities depend on forests for food and shelters compared to other ASEAN member countries.

With few forest-dependent communities, social forestry approaches in the country are extended to all levels of society. We intend to elevate the concern of sustainable forest management, biological diversity conservation, food security, climate change and effective forestry practices to all Bruneians through forestry extension services.

We have a very strong forest conservation policy that serves as a guiding principle in all our forestry programmes and undertakings. Currently, we are reviewing our forestry policy, to make sure that the policy is attuned to the current development and challenges faced by the forestry sector. One of it is to consider and explore the possibilities of increasing the conservation

areas of the reserved forests by converting the production forest areas in the reserved forest to conservation forest areas. As such, we will intensify the development of 30,000 ha forest plantations at the Inter-Riverine Zone area to support the domestic wood requirement of the country. The implementation of forest plantation establishment will also require wider participation from the private sector through joint-venture and co-production agreements.

In addition to the above policy review proposal, we have also considered strengthening the social forestry component of our National Forest Policy. The social forestry component aims to develop and enhance the social and cultural contributions of the forestry sector by strengthening stakeholder participations in related forest management activities thereby improving the well-being and quality of life for all levels of society.

In addition, we will also continue to commit and spearhead the active implementation of the Heart of Borneo (HoB) Initiative. At present, the Brunei HoB initiative receives overwhelming supports from government agencies, non-government organizations, private corporations, academic institutions, students and individuals all over the country. With the institutionalization of the Brunei HoB Centre, we are looking forward to continue the achievement of HoB goals with wider stakeholder participations.

Before I conclude my remark, once again I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizing committee for inviting me today and I wish everybody a fruitful discussion towards attaining the objectives of this conference.

On that note, with the kalimah... “Bismillah Hirahmaneer Raheem... I declare the 2nd ASEAN Social Forestry Network Conference officially open.

Thank you!

Mr Mahmud bin Haji Mohd Yusof, as Chairman of the Organizing Committee;

His Excellency, Mr Heinz Walker-Nederkoorn, Swiss Ambassador for ASEAN;

Mr Emmanuel Ze Meka, the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization [ITTO];

Excellencies , High Commissioners and Ambassadors;

Permanent Secretaries;

Delegates; Speakers; Conference Participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen.