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# Joint efforts by federal, state govts under Forestry Policy

► Blueprint outlines clear direction for sector to face new challenges at domestic and international levels, says PM

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Forestry Policy launched yesterday will witness all states joining forces to manage the nation's forests, which are about 120 million years old.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said all states agreed to adopt the policy at the 78th National Land Council meeting held on Jan 29. The policy outlines a clear direction for the forestry sector to face new challenges at the domestic and international levels.

"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 objectives of the Malaysian Forestry Policy will continue to be strong, to achieve the desired targets."

He said this in his speech at the launch of the Malaysian Forestry Policy in conjunction with national level International Day of Forests yesterday.

Also present was the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Datuk Seri Dr Shamsul Anuar Nasarah. In virtual attendance were mentris besard and chief ministers.

Muhyiddin said to achieve the goal of becoming a developed country, development is inevitable, but the government is very serious in managing forests responsibly and sustainably, in line with conservation programmes.

"As a responsible and caring government, various efforts were taken to fulfil the commitment made at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, by mainstreaming biodiversity management as part of national development.



Muhyiddin with a copy of the National Forestry Policy at the Kepong Botanical Garden, Forest Research Institute Malaysia yesterday. With him is Shamsul Anuar. – **BERNAMAPIX**

"Of the total forested areas in Malaysia, only 1.7% are degraded forests. Since 2016, a total of 1,859 ha of degraded areas have been reforested with an allocation of RM152.82 million."

The prime minister said the cost of maintaining and preserving the country's forest areas, which cover 55.3% or 18.27 million ha of the country's land area is enormous, needing about RM6 billion.

For this purpose, 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 Malaysia Forest Fund (MFF), established last year.

Muhyiddin said through MFF, the

country is expected to receive US\$100 million (RM400 million) in the next seven years which would be channelled to state governments for the conservation of forests, including social forests, to raise the socio-economic standard of orang asli and local communities.

He said based on the Food and Agriculture Organisation report, Malaysia is among 25 developing countries which have high forest cover and low deforestation activities.

Muhyiddin expressed his appreciation for the commitment by state governments to gazette sensitive environmental areas as permanent forest reserves, protected areas, wildlife reserves and areas of international interest.

He called on state governments

to step up efforts to gazette and maintain forest areas as Central Forest Spine (CFS) and Heart of Borneo.

"The Fourth National Physical Plan, which is being finalised, is also placing emphasis on CFS to ensure the continuity of forest landscape through the setting up of a new ecological corridor.

"This approach is capable of reducing the conflict between humans and wildlife, and enabling the free movement of wildlife especially national iconic species which are facing extinction."

On threatened species, Muhyiddin called on state governments to gazette habitat areas of Malayan tigers as permanent forest reserves or wildlife reserves. – Bernama