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FRIM optimistic of expanding forestry expertise globally

KUALA LUMPUR: In line with its establishment over 90 years ago, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) remains optimistic about providing the best input through research and development (R&D) in sustainable management of forest resources in the country.

Its director-general Dr Ismail Parlan said FRIM would continue to expand its expertise at the global level, especially in tropical countries, by offering appropriate services through collaborative partnership with those countries.

"The tropical countries have almost the same climate as Malaysia. The areas of expertise offered by FRIM include forest biotechnology, herbal processing, furniture testing, and forest carbon stock calculation.

"FRIM plans to include training invitations in those fields to foreign agencies this year," he told Bernama in an exclusive interview at his office in Kepong in conjunction with the International Day of Forests 2022 celebration.

"FRIM holds the chair of Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) for 2021-2024 term. We will use APAFRI platform to promote our services at the international stage.

"With such programmes, we can assist tropical countries that still need services and relevant expertise," he added.

Meanwhile, in conjunction with this year's International Day of Forests, Ismail said the national-level celebration will be held at Tanum Forest Reserve, Kuala Lipis, Pahang on March 26, organised by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources together with Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia.

FRIM will organise 51 types of tree species planting activities in line with the celebration.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 21 as the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2012 to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

According to Ismail, the community should appreciate

the role of forests, namely in economic development, such as the timber industry, environmental stability, climate change control, water supply as well as socio-economic and cultural development.

"Malaysia is committed to maintaining at least 50 per cent of its land area under forest cover (to honour its pledge made during the Rio Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992). Malaysia's forest cover is currently at 55.3 per cent or 18.3 million hectares of our total land area.

"This shows our commitment to conserve the forest area under the Malaysian Forestry Policy, launched on March 21 last year," he added.

The forestry sector is crucial to the country's economic development. The timber industry, for example, provides over 300,000 job opportunities and contributes an export value of over RM22 billion, said Ismail.

In line with this year's celebration theme 'Forests and sustainable production and consumption', he said FRIM is always committed to carrying out various research to assist and improve sustainable forest management (SFM), among others, the optimum use of forest resources, such as efficient use of wood resources for furniture.

"The studies conducted by FRIM to ensure the forestry aspects are well taken care of are through the rehabilitation of degraded forest areas with appropriate species and techniques.

"In the 100-million tree planting campaign, FRIM leads one of the campaign committees, which is the Tree Planting Technical Committee," he said, adding that some 27.7 million trees have been planted by various parties nationwide since the campaign was launched on Jan 5, 2021.

FRIM also conducts socio-economic research and strategic analysis on forestry and environmental issues for national development, said Ismail.

He also expressed the hope that the community would take care of the forest by avoiding vandalism when entering the recreational forests or encroachment of forest land. — Bernama



Ismail during the exclusive interview with Bernama recently. — Bernama photo