FGV and FRIM to Setup Rafflesia Conservation and Interpretive Centre

FGV Continues to Champion Conservation Efforts of World's Largest Flowers

GERIK, 16 NOV 2016 – Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad (FGV) and Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) announced today a collaboration to champion the conservation of the world's largest flowers with a ground breaking ceremony for the Rafflesia Conservation and Interpretive Centre (RCIC).

The first in Peninsula Malaysia, RCIC will be purpose-built in Gerik, Perak on a 223 ha plot of land contributed by Felda for research and conservation of the Rafflesia species. It is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

The ceremony was officiated by Dato' Dr. Abd Latif Mohmod, Director General of FRIM, together with Dr. Mohamad Khairil Mohamad Razi, Head Of Aerial Mapping, Land Survey and Land Data Management Section of FELDA.

Dato' Dr. Abd Latif said as Rafflesia is the icon for Gerik, the local community should be actively involved in the RCIC project to conserve the species. Also, Gerik is the perfect in-situ site for Rafflesia within the network of threatened species germplasm in our country.

"FRIM will also conduct reforestation activities to improve the biodiversity richness at the site," added Dato' Dr Abd Latif.

This is the first collaboration project between the private sector and government agencies in Peninsular Malaysia concerning Rafflesia research and conservation. The initiative to establish RCIC started in 2013 following the discovery of a Rafflesia population nearby Sungai Lebey area, in Felda Bersia Timur in Gerik, Perak.

This collaborative project is intended to serve as a "one-stop centre" for research, education and conservation of the endangered species of Rafflesia. Perak is the only state which is home of three such species – Rafflesia azlanii, R. cantleyi and R. kerrii.

Group President and Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Zakaria Arshad said FGV's sustainability strategy now focuses on implementing best practices holistically, and adhering to all relevant regulatory and sustainability requirements.

"Today is a historic day for FGV. We are truly pleased that we are part of this conservation effort. We believe in engaging with the public through education to create awareness of the environment and to help them better understand this unique flower," Dato' Zakaria added.

Datuk Hanapi Suhada, Director General of FELDA said, the Rafflesia or giant flower is a protected species in Malaysia and can only be found in South East Asia. Malaysia became the habitat to eight out of 20 species.

“This is a gift from Mother Nature and as Malaysian citizens we should be proud that our Felda Bersia is home to this unique and endangered species. Adhering to the principle of environmental sustainability, we shall continue to provide our support to the conservation efforts championed by other parties such as FRIM to conserve the world’s eco-heritage,” Datuk Hanapi said.

The RCIC is expected to become one of the country’s eco-tourism destinations and increase the potential for Gerik to be an important eco-tourism centre for the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) in Malaysia.

Once completed, RCIC may also serve as a venue for international symposiums, workshops, colloquiums, environmental awareness programmes for both public and the scientific fraternity.

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