



PRESS RELEASE

ASEAN Forum on Peatland Biodiversity

**Bandar Seri Begawan,
Monday, 28 Safar 1446 / 2 September 2024**

The ASEAN Forum on Peatland Biodiversity is jointly organized by the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism through the Forestry Department and *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) SUPA/REPEAT, with support from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), commencing from the 2nd to 5th September 2024.

Present as the Guest of Honour during the opening event was Yang Mulia Awang Reni bin Haji Yahya, Deputy Director of Forestry. This forum is attended by 52 participants from ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste, including experts, researchers and policymakers, to discuss biodiversity and ecology in the peat swamp forests within the ASEAN region.

Over the next three days, forum participants will engage in a series of presentations and discussions covering various topics. These include the contribution of peatland biodiversity to the global and regional biodiversity and climate change agenda; the importance and status of peatland in Brunei Darussalam; the status of peatland biodiversity and species-level conservation as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Brunei Darussalam; comparisons of peatlands biodiversity in protected versus unprotected areas in Brunei Darussalam; sharing national biodiversity commitments among ASEAN Member States under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2030; and the vulnerability of peatland in biodiversity due to land use and climate change in Indonesia and Malaysia.

This forum will be followed by a field trip to the Badas Peat Swamp Forest in Belait District, providing participants with direct exposure to and information about the peat swamp forest restoration initiative and the National Forest Resources Inventory project implemented in the area. During the visit, participants will also plant 50 *Shorea albida* saplings.

The forum aims to enhance understanding and cooperation on peatland biodiversity management. It will address the conservation status of peatlands, threats to biodiversity, and strategies for effective conservation. This event provides Brunei Darussalam with an opportunity to showcase its commitment to peatland conservation and to engage with regional partners on shared challenges. The forum aligns with the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) 2023-2030, supporting the commitment of ASEAN Member States, especially Brunei Darussalam, to protect and preserve peatlands for future generations.

Brunei Darussalam has peat swamp forest coverage of more than 90,000 hectares and is currently conducting the National Forest Resources Inventory project to update data on its entire forest resources, with a primary focus on the carbon inventory in the Belait Peat Swamp Forest.

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