



SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

**Melaka Declaration in Support of
Conservation and Stronger Protection
of Malaysia's Biodiversity**

August 22, 2014

Malaysia's biodiversity is among the richest on earth, a natural capital asset which is critical to the wellbeing and sustained development of the nation. Malaysia has the potential to lead the world by setting an example of enlightened development.

Recognising that **biodiversity is our life, our heritage and our future**, we, as one of the largest gatherings of conservation biologists ever in Malaysia, representing 400 scientists, experts, researchers, policy makers and students from 45 nations, recommend that the Government of Malaysia:

- Take immediate actions to **strengthen leadership in biodiversity conservation** at both federal and state levels. Safeguarding the nation's natural capital, which biodiversity and ecosystem services underpin, will be essential for Malaysia to meet its development aspirations in a sustainable, inclusive and equitable manner in line with the government's transformation agenda and the **commitment to keep 50% of land under natural forest cover**.
- Take immediate steps to **implement the Global Biodiversity Strategy 2011–2020 and meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets**, to which Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity — including Malaysia — have committed themselves.
- Make available the necessary financial and human resources to **implement the Central Forest Spine master plan**, backed by strong political commitments at both federal and state levels, while creating the needed legal frameworks, innovative financing schemes and public engagement to make it a reality.
- Commit to the effective implementation of national laws and policies, including obligations under Multilateral Environment Agreements that Malaysia is Party to, such as the **Heart of Borneo project**. These actions require the development of rigorous, effective and transparent **monitoring, reporting, evaluation and adaptive management**.
- Mobilise and enhance cross-sectoral mechanisms to **curb illegal encroachment in Protected Areas**, including poaching, and strive towards achieving zero net degradation of Protected Areas and prevent further decline of endangered species as a first step in promoting their recovery.
- **Invest in fundamental sciences** such as taxonomy, pure biological research, biodiversity inventory and monitoring. This will allow for the conservation of biodiversity and also its sustainable utilisation, based on a robust science-policy interface with the socio-economic wellbeing of the nation at its heart.

It is our obligation to humanity and future generations, and we must act now. By the adoption of this Melaka Declaration, participants of SCB Asia 2014 and the SCB pledge to assist the Government of Malaysia in delivering sustainable development, as well as call upon the international community to join and support this call to conserve one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots.