

Technologies very relevant to forest management

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KUCHING: With the advancement of technologies and digitalisation in many aspects of development, Sarawak can no longer be oblivious to the use of technologies and be isolated as its forests can be seen and remotely monitored from anywhere in the world, says Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg.

He noted that at the same time, the advancement of technologies could be used to the advantage as they could be used to manage the state's forests more efficiently.

He cited developed countries like Finland as an example where forest owners could take care of their forest-related business from the comfort of their homes, using the service portal that provides latest information on forest areas in terms of forest stands, stocking and soil types.

This service portal, he pointed out, could also suggest possible logging method or other forest management activities for the area as well as providing related income and cost estimates.

“As in other industries, information system is one of the technologies that have a big impact on their operation; likewise it also applies to forest management.

“Sustainable forest management requires timely and accurate information, and with the advancement of technologies this information is readily and easily available with the snap of your finger.

“This would enable the decision maker to make an informed decision,” he said at the opening ceremony of the 18th Malaysian Forestry Conference here yesterday.

Abang Johari believed that technologies could also offer options for a more pragmatic approach in conservation of biodiversity, like tracking and monitoring. He said this is also in line with the Sarawak government's aspiration to become a digital government.

“For us in Sarawak, we strive to stay abreast with the latest technologies in the area of forest planning, monitoring and enforcement. Drone, for example, is widely used in monitoring and reconnaissance works especially in areas where access is limited, while geospatial technology is capable of capturing, storing, analysing and displaying geographically referenced information in real time,” he noted.

The Chief Minister pointed out that since Malaysia is a signatory to many international conventions and multi-lateral environmental agreements, data on forest and other land uses need to be reported periodically.

He said all of these are made possible with the help of technology.

He noted that on a larger scale, Sarawak has embarked on information-sharing through 'big data' to enable better coordination within state agencies.

“Having said that, and with all the advancement of technology that is being used now, it is secondary if the integrity and sanctity of our forests is not sufficiently guarded.

“Therefore this is where the focus and emphasis on research and development is vital.

“It is my fervent hope that the conference resolutions would capture various issues on research and development, technologies and develop ideas on how we move forward as one to address challenges in forest management at the national, regional and global levels as well as for future collaboration in forestry.”

About 600 participants and observers from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak are attending the conference. They come from the three regional forestry agencies, various research and academic institutions related to forestry, relevant government agencies and ministries, timber industries and non-government organisations.