

# Federal govt allocating funds for forestry inventory — Dr Xavier

September 28, 2018, Friday



r Xavier (third left in front row) and other dignitaries checking out the exhibits at the HoB trilateral meeting expo.

MIRI: The federal Cabinet has given the nod for forestry inventory to be accorded top priority.

As such, it will put aside allocations under Budget 2019 for national forestry inventory including for Sarawak and Sabah while encouraging Private Funding Initiative (PFI) in Heart of Borneo initiatives for conservation and reforestation in both states.

“We have the funds available as having national forest inventory is directed by the Cabinet,” Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar said when asked on the Sarawak state government allocating more funds for its sustainability agenda.

“The allocation this time will depend on the budget we have and as you know, our budget is constrained by the national debts,” he added.

He hoped the forest inventory exercise could be completed by the end of next year to enable the government produce documentation on the national forest inventory to pave the way for green bonds revenue and access to international conservation funding.

Dr Xavier is confident of expediting the inventory procedure with the availability of aerial surveillance plane purchased by the ministry.

He commended the Sarawak government for starting the forestry inventory procedure and hoped that Sabah would follow suit.

“Hence, when we have the statistics, we can sell this asset, which already has its market,” he told reporters here yesterday after officiating at the Heart of Borneo (HoB) 2018 trilateral meeting between Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei here yesterday.

He said the federal government had allocated over RM100 million to Sabah and Sarawak for the HoB initiative since 2009 but would welcome financial and technical assistance from international organisations.

He said Malaysia recognised the conservation initiative by the three countries and called for enhanced trans-boundary collaborations and promotion of HoB efforts to the global community.

Malaysia currently maintains 55.3 per cent of its 330,803 sq km land mass as forested areas in conforming with her commitment to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1982.

He said the ministry has allocated funds each year to the Sarawak government for conservation efforts but strongly encouraged private financing initiative to complement this effort.

Dr Xavier said he was confident the state government would be willing to cooperate on the initiative and acknowledged that the federal government was very interested in the project.

Also present at the opening ceremony were Sarawak State Legislative Assembly deputy speaker Dato Gerawat Gala, Assistant Minister of Urban Development, Land Administration and Environment Datuk Len Talif Salleh, who represented Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan, Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources secretary-general Datuk Dr Tan Yew Chong, Sarawak Forest director Hamden Mohammad, heads of delegations from Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia and heads of government departments.