

Management of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) in Peninsular Malaysia as Part of Sustainable Forest Management Practices

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Abstract : Tropical forests in Malaysia safeguard enormous biological diversity while providing crucial benefits and services for the sustainable development of human communities. They are highly significant globally, both for their diverse and threatened species and as representative unique ecosystems. In order to promote the conservation and sustainable management of forest in this country, the Forestry Department (FD) is using ITTO guidelines on managing the forest under the Sustainable Forest Management practice (SFM). The fundamental principles of SFM are the sustained provision of products, goods and services; economic viability, social acceptability and the minimization of environmental/ecological impacts. With increased awareness and recognition of the importance of tropical forests and biodiversity in the global environment, efforts have been made to classify forests and natural areas with unique values or properties in a universally accepted scale. In line with that the concept of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) first used by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 1999, has been adopted and included as Principle '9' in the Malaysia Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification (MC&I 2002). The MC&I 2002 is a standard used for assessing forest management practices of the Forest Management Unit (FMU) level for purpose of certification. The key to the concept of HCVF is identification of HCVs of the forest. This paper highlighted initiative taken by the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia in establishing and managing HCVF areas within the Permanent Forest Reserves (PFE). To date almost all states forestry department in Peninsular Malaysia have established HCVFs in their respective states under different categories. Among others, the establishments of HCVF in this country are related to the importance of conserving biological diversity of the flora in the natural forest in particular endemic and threatened species such as *Shorea bentongensis*. As such it is anticipated that by taking this important initiatives, it will promote the conservation of biological diversity in the PFE of Peninsular Malaysia in line with the Sustainable Forest Management practice.

Keywords : high conservation value forest, sustainable forest management, forest management certification, Peninsular Malaysia

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