

Vital to respect ecosystems and diversity

MALAYSIA and the rest of the world celebrated International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22, 2020 with the theme "Our solutions are in Nature".

In conjunction with the special day, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources teamed up with ERE Consulting Group to organise two online webinars on May 21. They featured prominent speakers representing key sectors in the governance, research and conservation of biodiversity in Malaysia.

One of the highlights during the discussions was the outstanding roles played by our diverse ecosystem and the vital services they provide for Nature and for society.

Eversince the beginning of their existence, humans have depended on Nature and its resources.

As time goes by, the increasing demand on resources has exacted a punishing toll on the natural ecosystems. In the last 50 years alone, human population has doubled and the global economy has grown four-fold, resulting in great demand for materials and energy.

On top of this, the levels of pollution and impact from climate change have also become more and more apparent.

It is important to note that ecosystems provide tremendous services ranging from the production of food to the regulation of water and climate.

Every ecosystem provides important provisioning services such as in the production of food, raw materials as well as medicinal, pharmaceutical and genetic resources.

Each and every single ecosystem also plays an important role in regulating environmental physical and biological processes, such as in maintaining the hydrology, atmospheric, carbon and other nutrient cycles.

Wetlands and coastal ecosystems in particular are instrumental in moderating extreme weather events, preventing floods and erosion, as well as in treating waters and sediments from excessive nutrients, silts, pathogens and pollutants.

All ecosystems host a myriad variety of species, population and communities of microorganisms, plants and animals, indicating the wide variety of genetic resources, particularly in a tropical megadiverse country like ours.

Pollination by insects, birds,

bats and other agents is determined to be one of the key localised cycles that ensures the continuous production of fruits, which is critical for ecosystems to play their provisioning role.

Biological diversity contributes significantly to Man's survival and sustainability.

Considering the importance of biodiversity and our critical dependency on the ecosystem, it is astonishing that we have lost so much forested area.

Let us reflect on our actions and the impact on the ecosystems and biodiversity. The solutions to many of our issues lie in them.

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