

## Seminar focuses on forest management issues

January 11, 2019, Friday at 12:05 AM Jacob Achoi, reporters@theborneopost.com



Liam (seated third right) with the Forest senior staff and participants in a photocall at the seminar closing ceremony.

**KUCHING:** Fifty participants from various ministries, government departments and agencies, organisations and institutions of higher learning attended a one-day Asia Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)-Community Based Sustainable Forest Management of Sungai Medihit Watershed Sarawak 2019 seminar yesterday.

The project, which targeted two isolated communities – the Kelabit of Long Napir and Penan of Kampung Bahagia – was another initiative of the Forest Department for a sustainable forest management in Sarawak.

It covers an area of about 35,400 hectares and is located in Ulu Limbang.

Forest director Hamden Mohammad said the goal of the project was to promote sustainable forest management in Sungai Medihit watershed area by building the community's capacity, demonstrating innovative operational model and establishing new governance mechanism on community development.

“The state government remains committed in ensuring the forest and forest resources are managed in a sustainable manner ... and this project is very much in line with the state government's bigger initiative of seeing the forest to be managed in a sustainable manner which is through the certification of long-term timber licences as forest management certification,” he said in his speech read by Forest deputy director Jack Liam at the closing ceremony.

Liam represented Hamden at the event.

Hamden added that the state already has five licences for planted forest covering an area of 75,493.35 hectares certified under forest plantation which was in addition to the six forest management units (FMUs) covering an area of 561, 703 hectares for natural forest.

He further stressed that the Sarawak government has shown a strong commitment for sustainable forest management by increasing the Heart of Borneo (HoB) area from 2.1 million hectares to 2.7 million hectares, thus further expanding it into 6.8 million hectares, which is equal to 30 per cent of the total HoB's designated area.

He hoped that the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) or APFNet could support relevant projects, especially within HoB to enhance the sustainable development and conservation agenda of the Sarawak government.

According to him, ITTO has come a long way in transboundary projects by working with the Forest Department and Sarawak Forestry Corporation, adding that ITTO's first project was in Lanjak Entimau which started in 1993 and completed in 2009, making it the longest project that ITTO has supported anywhere in the world.