MEDIA RELEASE

Protecting Sabah’s Environment is a Collective Responsibility

2 September 2020, Kota Kinabalu: WWF-Malaysia urges Sabahans across the state to take action for the environment. They can do so by voicing out their environmental concerns to their political leaders ahead of the state elections to ensure that Sabah’s rich biodiversity continues to be protected and conserved for the benefit of people and nature.

To this end, WWF-Malaysia recently launched a survey inquiring Sabahans about their environmental concerns and areas in which they are most concerned about.

The environmental survey, which was released last Thursday, 27th August 2020 via digital media and messaging service, will allow the public to voice out their concerns in a collective manner and call upon their political leaders to act upon it.

The survey included questions on the level of concern for the environment, the topics of concern as well as whether or not the environment will factor into a voter’s decision on which candidate they would vote for.

“The results of this survey can serve as a platform for politicians and leaders to truly understand the concerns of the people and find effective solutions to tackle environmental issues. After all, this state and its resources are ours to share and safeguard,” said WWF-Malaysia Head of Conservation Sabah Dr. Robecca Jumin.

WWF-Malaysia also reiterates its call to political parties to include bold yet achievable environmental commitments in their manifestos. In its open letter shared with all political parties in Sabah last week, WWF-Malaysia outlined its six key environmental asks. These include:

1. How will parties meet the 30% Totally Protected Area of Sabah’s landmass target in a way that will also improve the standard of living for the local communities?
2. What are their plans to spur green growth in Sabah which ensures safeguards for people and nature? How will their party ensure that oil palm production in Sabah is sustainable through the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) and eventually, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification and the expansion of oil palm is capped at 1.6 million hectares?
3. What are their plans to ensure environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection is factored into all major infrastructure and development projects in Sabah so that people and nature can live in harmony?
4. How do they plan to address poaching, taking into consideration some of those involved are stateless people or those living in hardcore poverty?
5. How do they plan to continue with the commitment of 13% or more Marine Protected Areas in Sabah to ensure a thriving marine biodiversity and ecosystem resilience?
6. How do they plan to increase the resilience of Sabah’s people, nature and economy, in a way that creates jobs for Sabahans in light of a very possible future that includes zoonotic and climate change disasters?

Sabah is rich in natural resources and its biodiversity is considered world-class. The environment is an integral part of every Sabahans’ lives as it contributes to the clean air we breathe, the clean water we drink as well as the various other resources that we obtain from it to sustain and thrive.

“Whether or not we continue to have a pristine ecosystem in the next 5 years is up to us as a collective. As Sabahans, we all equally shoulder the responsibility to care for the environment. Our actions, no matter how small, will have a profound impact on the protection of our wildlife and its habitat.

“Aside from filling out the survey, I also urge all Sabahans to ask these questions to your political leaders or parties. It is up to us now as a collective to reshape the way we think about the environment and pull all our efforts together to ensure that our future is a sustainable one.

“In order to secure our future, we need to take charge now, and we can begin with using our voices and our votes,” Dr. Robecca said.

The survey will end on the 11th of September 2020 and its results will be shared on the 16th of September 2020. Those who are interested in filling out the survey can visit this link: bit.ly/sabahenv

WWF-Malaysia is a non-partisan environmental NGO operating in Sabah since the 1970s. Regardless of the political outcomes from the state elections, WWF-Malaysia champions the protection of biodiversity for the benefit of people and nature.

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About WWF-Malaysia
WWF-Malaysia (World Wide Fund for Nature-Malaysia) was established in Malaysia in 1972. It currently runs more than 90 projects covering a diverse range of environmental conservation and protection work, from saving endangered species such as tigers and turtles, to protecting our highland forests, rivers and seas. The national conservation organisation also undertakes environmental education and advocacy work to achieve its conservation goals. Its mission is to stop the degradation of the earth’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the nation’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. For latest news and media resources, visit http://www.wwf.org.my/media_and_information/media_centre/

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