22 August 2020, Kota Kinabalu: In light of the upcoming Sabah state elections, WWF-Malaysia urges all political parties to include ambitious yet achievable environmental commitments in their manifestos to ensure that Sabah’s biodiversity is safeguarded in the interests of both nature and people.

“We are living in an unprecedented time where the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all our lives and livelihoods. It is even more important now that we ensure a healthy and resilient recovery for people and nature in Sabah,” said Dr. Robecca Jumin, WWF-Malaysia’s Head of Conservation for Sabah.

In an 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?

A thriving ecosystem and environment as a whole is an integral part of ensuring the wellbeing of the state and its people. It is with this in mind that WWF-Malaysia urges political parties and political leaders to ensure that their manifestos factor in the key environmental asks that will benefit not only the environment but also communities and the state.

“It is only through a thriving ecosystem will we be able to enjoy the benefits from Mother Nature, which includes water, food, shelter, and economic opportunities. Therefore, a firm
commitment to keeping our biodiversity intact is the first step in ensuring sustainable development for Sabah in the long run.

“By informing voters of your aspirations, plans for sustainable development and highlighting the crucial role of biodiversity on the integrity of the state, you will then allow voters to make informed decisions,” said Dr. Robecca.

Attached with this press release is the Open Letter to Political Parties in Sabah. WWF-Malaysia is a non-partisan environmental NGO, working on biodiversity (habitat and Wildlife) protection, sustainable production, and restoration of degraded habitats in Sabah.

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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/

Note to the media:
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2) Should you need more information, please see the details below but please note that this person is for contact purposes only and is not the organisation’s authorised spokesperson, so we would appreciate it if this name is not printed in the article.

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