

UPM inks MoU on conservation

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UNIVERSITI Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre Bhd (TRCRC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) towards the establishment of the National Forest Conservation Centre.

The MoU, which aims to pioneer efforts to address the destruction of forests by implementing replanting projects also involves two other parties, namely Biodiversity International and the French Centre for International Cooperation In Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD).

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris said the collaboration would become a platform for all parties to coordinate forest landscape restoration projects in Malaysia and the region, with an emphasis on community, training, public awareness and research.

She said the collaboration would provide more opportunities for all parties to share experiences, ideas and research output dealing with tropical rainforest conservation.

"Through this MoU, all parties have agreed to the following cooperation, which is to secure related projects according to the niche area of each party, while UPM and TRCRC will seek funding from the Malaysian government and the private sector.

"Biodiversity International and CIRAD, meanwhile, will help scientists seek collaborative research with UPM and TRCRC and I assure that UPM will play a key role for a successful and fruitful implementation of this MoU," she said in her speech before signing the agreement at Galeri Putra.

She stressed that the collaboration would be a synergistic blend that could lead them to more sustainable tropical rain-



Prof Aini presents a memento to Jeanne (right) following the signing ceremony. — Bernama

forest conservation.

Meanwhile, TRCRC chairman Tun Jeanne Abdullah hoped the MoU would develop a concept and explore the possibility of centralising the various stakeholders to achieve a more holistic and coordinated forest landscape restoration efforts in the country.

The wife of former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Jeanne would also like to see more scientists to be

trained in the area of forest restoration which includes silvicultural techniques, environmental economics, biodiversity, species selection, carbon storage, soil health and other related disciplines.

"Before this, everyone was working on their own, so this MoU is an opportunity for all partners to look into a concept and explore opportunities for restoring our rainforests," she said. — Bernama