

Palm Oil Wildlife Conservation Fund launched

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According to Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, the fund's objective was also to campaign for the use of sustainable practices to enhance high standards.

He made a global call to oil palm plantations to enroll in the Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) which acknowledges that palm oil is a crucial and multipurpose raw material for both food and non-food industries.

Najib, in his keynote address at the International Bio fuel and Alternative Energy Conference 2006 on Tuesday said "It contributes to the economic development of producing countries and the diets of millions of people around the world. However, production and use of palm oil must be done in a sustainable manner based on economic, social and environmental viability."

Datuk Dr S.Vijayarajam, the Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry parliamentary secretary Senator read the Deputy Premier's speech.

The Deputy Prime Minister also said that the palm oil industry was one of the main pillars of the nation's economy, with palm oil products contributing some RM27bil in exports last year. Over 80% of palm oil was used for food items with the remaining 20% for non-food applications particularly oleo chemicals.

"I am proud to note that the palm oil industry has been one of the leading producers and users of biofuel right from the beginning, namely solid bio fuel in the form of palm fibres and shell that are used to fuel the boilers in palm oil plants".

Another new growth area of great potential was oil palm biomass, Najib said, adding that biomass utilisation was gaining momentum in recent years largely due to global concerns over environmental pollution.

He held that the vast biomass resources available in the industry have not been fully exploited until now.

"It is encouraging to see some progress in Malaysia in this direction because there are now industrial plants manufacturing particle board, medium density fibreboard and plywood from palm oil. "The Government would like the industry to tap all the available biomass and come up with value-added products that will enhance the industry's growth, competitiveness and sustainability," he concluded. THE END.