



► Friday, 1st February, 2013

FIELD TRIP TO KUALA BALAI PEAT SWAMP KICK STARTS BSP-WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sendirian Berhad (BSP) and Wetlands International (WI) Malaysia introduced the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) project area to stakeholders by leading a visit to the Kuala Balai peat swamp yesterday morning.

Representatives from various government agencies joined the trek as part of a familiarization of the area and also in celebration of World Wetlands Day. To protect and restore wetland areas of high biodiversity value in the lower Belait valley, BSP and WI have partnered together to create a plan that will contain a set of future actions that will lead to the conservation or enhancement of biodiversity of the area. This BAP project is also in line with the Belait District's Plan and the Heart of Borneo project.

Lt. Col (Rtd) Hj Amir Hamzah Hj Hanafi, BSP Head Communications and External Affairs, said, "BSP is very pleased to be collaborating with WI and with our various partners in the government, educational institutes, NGO's and the general public to do our part in environmental conservation. This is a collective effort and each of us has a role to play in maintaining our natural heritage. The BAP benefits Brunei Darussalam on many levels, from environmental protection to human capacity development."

Dr Jonathan Davies, WI Project Leader said, "I am very pleased to be involved in the biodiversity action plan project. Not only does it aim to conserve and enhance the fabulous natural heritage of Brunei, but it also aims to reduce the occurrence of damaging fires in the project area and to rehabilitate and reforest degraded areas. These are very worthy objectives and we will be working closely with our partners in the Brunei government and academe to achieve them. We are also very keen to involve young Bruneians in the project activities to build a strong national capacity to safeguard the environment of Brunei for future generations."

The 18-month project aims to develop and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for BSJV's coastal concession area and the peatlands, in particular the Badas peat dome. The plan will also pave the way for the implementation of prevention and control of fire in peatlands, especially in the Badas dome, and the development of an implementation plan for restoration of degraded peatlands.

The communities in the project area will benefit directly from the implementation of the BAP as it will comprise measures to mitigate the risks of peat fire hazes to public health, now an annual occurrence. It also contributes to Brunei's efforts in helping reduce global warming and ecosystem destruction. This project supports the nation's efforts towards the development of knowledge and skills for the country's academic and research institutions by having Bruneians participating and contributing as specialists and research assistants as much as possible.

This project involves the continuous collective effort and support from many different government agencies in working with BSP and WI where such collaboration highlights the importance of working closely together to make a meaningful difference to Brunei Darussalam in preserving its green heritage for future generations.

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Notes to Editors: Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sdn Bhd (BSP) should be referred as BSP or Brunei Shell Petroleum for abbreviation or headline purposes. Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sdn Bhd's activity is primarily for the exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas from onshore and offshore fields. The Government of Brunei Darussalam and a company in the Royal Dutch Shell Group of Companies each owns a 50% stake in BSP.