



PRESS RELEASE

FLAG-OFF CEREMONY

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM EXPEDITION ON FOREST TO REEF IN CONJUNCTION WITH BRUNEI MID-YEAR CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION (MYCE) 2025

Bandar Seri Begawan
Monday, 19 May 2025

The Flag-Off Ceremony for the Brunei Darussalam Expedition on Forest to Reef in conjunction with the Brunei Mid-Year Conference and Exhibition (MYCE) 2025 was held on the morning of 19th May 2025 at Mangrove Paradise Resort. Present as the Guest of Honour was Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr. Awang Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metusin, Minister of Primary Resources and Tourism. Also present were the High Commissioners and Ambassadors, Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretaries as well as Head of Departments from the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism and representatives from various government agencies.

The ceremony commenced with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah and Doa Selamat, followed by the flag-off for the Brunei Darussalam Expedition on Forest to Reef and proceeded with a week-long scientific expedition from 19th May to 25th May 2025 at Mangrove Biodiversity of Pulau Selirong and Marine Ecosystem of Pulau Pelong-Pelongan. The research team consisted of experts from the Institute for Biodiversity and Environmental Research (IBER) of Universiti Brunei Darussalam, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and Center for Ocean Plastic Studies of Kyushu University Japan.

Mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs are often found together and work in concert as a single system that keeps coastal zones healthy, as well as provide habitat for thousands of species at all levels of marine and forest food webs. Despite the importance of the two distinct areas of Pulau Selirong mangrove forest to the marine ecosystem of Pulau Pelong-Pelongan, reliable, accurate, and timely information of the two pristine environments is not available. Threats from deforestation and the looming sea-level rise around the world have been a major source of concern, as they may endanger the area's biodiversity.

Therefore, among the objectives of the scientific expedition was to extract more accurate data and to document biodiversity hotspots in Pulau Selirong and Pulau Pelong-Pelongan which is important to enable targeted conservation efforts to protect the most valuable and vulnerable habitats. In addition, the baseline data would be used to assess the health and stability of ecosystems over time, detecting threats such as habitat degradation, pollution, or climate change impacts.

The expedition was jointly organized by the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism through the Forestry Department and the Department of Fisheries, partnered with Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and Poni Groups aim to unite experts, researchers and policymakers, both local and international, to share knowledge, discuss best practices and enhance collaboration in managing interconnected ecosystems from forests to reefs. Scientific findings from this expedition will contribute to Brunei Darussalam's biodiversity conservation framework, support the Blue Economy, and explore eco-tourism as a sustainable development path which later will be presented at the Brunei Darussalam Conference on Forest to Reef at the International Conference Centre, Berakas from 17th to 19th June 2025.

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Prepared by: Forestry Department & Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism Brunei Darussalam