

South-South Cooperation workshop held in Pekanbaru

Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan opened a workshop on South-South Cooperation (SSC) in Pekanbaru, Riau, on Tuesday that was focused on sustainable development issues in the three major tropical forested areas remaining in the world: Indonesia, Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Zulkifli said the government was committed to sustainable forest development because nearly 67 percent of the country's land area was forested. "Sustainable development involves every stakeholder, especially local residents," he said.

According to Zulkifli, the seven biosphere reserves in Indonesia – Siberut, Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu, Ujung Kulon, Cibodas, Tanjung Putting, Lore Lindu and Komodo – have provided significant benefits in supporting the implementation of REDD+ (United Nations collaborative program on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries), especially efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, through reforestation in buffer and utilization zones.

Regarding climate change, Zulkifli said that Indonesia had issued a regulation on the implementation of REDD and formed the National Council on Climate Change. The government has also implemented the REDD+ regulation that sets aside 70 percent of the carbon trade to the communities living around the forest.

Riau Governor Rusli Zainal said the SCC agenda was strategic and very valuable to Riau, which has a forested area of 107,932.17 square kilometers.

"Riau needs input to manage and protect its natural resources sustainably so it can enjoy economic, social and environmental benefits," he said.

According to Rusli, the provincial administration has implemented sustainable management and protection of peatlands, given that 60 percent of Riau's landed area is peatland.

"Peatlands have been given special priority because they are related to several environmental issues such as forest fires, haze and greenhouse gas emission," he said.

The workshop was attended by participants from 18 countries including Brazil, France, Belgium, Korea and ASEAN countries.