

**GEC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Forum – Building Partnership for the Environment**  
23 April 2019, Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac)

**FORUM SUMMARY**

GEC has been working for 20 years with different partners and stakeholders in natural resources and environmental protection and conservation in Malaysia and globally. In conjunction with its 20th anniversary, GEC has organised a forum entitled “Building Partnership for the Environment” to bring together different stakeholders to share experiences and success stories in multi-stakeholder management of natural resources with the following objectives:

- To showcase multi-stakeholder partnership in the environment and natural resource conservation;
- To bring together GEC’s partner/supporters, communities and media to share experience and success stories in the environment and natural resource conservation; and
- To raise awareness on the role and importance of engagement of different stakeholders in environment and natural resource conservation.

The Forum was held on April 23, 2019, at Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPAC) and has gathered more than 100 participants from the government, private sector, community and civil society, to share experiences, challenges and success stories on multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership in natural resources management.

Among the topics that were discussed is sustainable management of peatland, river, water, forest and coastal resources through active partnerships with various stakeholders including companies, government agencies, community-based organisations, universities and local communities.

Below is the summary of the forum:

**Welcome and Opening**

In his welcoming speech, **Mr. Zainudin Ismail**, Chairman of Global Environment Centre highlighted the pivotal role of GEC in closing the gaps and bringing together partners for effective environmental stewardship through active involvement in policy development, building capacity and facilitating independent dialogue with civil society that leads to a more sustainable ecosystem.

**YB. Dr. Xavier Jayakumar**, Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources, was represented by **Datuk Zurinah Pawanteh**, Secretary General of the Ministry to the Forum. In delivering Dr. Xavier Jayakumar’s opening speech, Datuk Zurinah stressed upon the importance of concerted efforts from different sectors and actors in conserving and managing natural resources and acknowledged GEC’s notable contributions to the development of environmental conservation in our country.

Datuk Zurinah Pawanteh later launched the GEC's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book which highlight GEC's 20 years achievements as well as the River Ranger 2.0 – an updated GEC's training programme on river monitoring.

### **Keynote Paper Presentation**

**Mr. Faizal Parish**, Director, Global Environment Centre presented a keynote paper on **“GEC's 20 years of Building Partnerships for the Environment”** (*click here to view the presentation*). In his presentation, Faizal highlighted the milestone and achievements made by GEC over the last 20 years, the challenges as well as GEC's plans for the next 20 years.

### **Session 1: Sustainable Peatland Management and Haze Prevention**

Moderator: Dato' Halimah Hassan, *GEC Advisory Council Member*

Paper Presentation: **GEC's Role on Sustainable Peatland Management and Smoke Haze Prevention** by Ms Serena Lew, *Coordinator, Peatland Programme, GEC* ([click here to view the presentation](#))

Panel Members:

- **Mr. Grippin Anak Akeng**, *Section Head (Wetlands Forest Management), Forestry Dept. Peninsular Malaysia* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **Puan Mashitah Darus**, *Director of Air Division, Dept of Environment Malaysia* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **Dr. Surina binti Ismail**, *Sustainability Director, IOI Corporation Berhad* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **Mr. Faizal Parish**, *Director of GEC*

### **Summary**

A question on whether there is an integrated policy to solve peat issues was raised by an audience member. Panelists agreed that while every relevant party has a similar vision in saving peat, in managing peatland sustainably, there is no integrated policy between agencies. However, there is an integrated management plan (IMP) to monitor every action on peat. But, Dr Surina affirmed that individual implementation is not enough. Engagement from every stakeholder is the key to overcome haze issues as well as implementing sustainable peatland management. Puan Mashitah Darus added that the public also has responsibility to prevent haze. For example, the public can help by not doing open burning and practice zero burning in agriculture. Mr Faizal Parish agreed and added that the youth is the future. If they believe they can make changes and start making sustainable implementations, they can make a difference. When suggested by an audience member to build an integrated policy where engagements from different stakeholders can be enhanced, all panelists agreed that we do need to build an integrated platform between agencies and other stakeholders to practice the existing law on peat forests and improve each stakeholder's engagement.

## **Session 2: River and Water Resources Management**

Moderator: YB Bhg Dato' Ir Lim Chow Hock, *GEC Advisory Council Member*

Paper presentation: **Community & River Management – GEC@20Y** by Dr K. Kalithasan, *Manager, River Care Programme, GEC* ([click here to view the presentation](#))

Panel Members:

- **Tn. Hj. Md. Khairi Selamat**, *Director, River Basin Management Division, DID Malaysia*
- **Ms. Renuka Indrarajah**, *Trustee of SPARK Foundation* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **En. Mohd. Halim Mohd Said**, *Chairman, KRT Rumah Pangsa AU2 Taman Keramat* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **Dr. K. Kalithasan**, *Manager, River Care Programme, GEC*

### **Summary**

On public engagement, Tn. Hj. Md. Khairi Selamat stated that the public needs to look at the real issues and the need to protect and clean the river/stream while En Mohd Halim Mohd Said believed that once they have realized how a healthy riverine can benefit them, their engagement can be enhanced. For example, the community of Rumah Pangsa AU2 Taman Keramat started off with Program Gotong Royong and Drainage Management (Clean -up) which leads to various other programmes when the community realized that the clean surrounding helps the environment, especially in reducing the dengue cases along the vicinity. Every panelist agreed that how we mobilise the community is very important because all of us have different roles to play in caring for our rivers. Ms Renuka Indrarajah mentioned that SPARK Foundation have been working with GEC empowering the local communities, educating them on identifying their River Address, their water source and its importance through river restoration, rehabilitation and water conservation. However, a question was brought up by audience members regarding how agencies can address issues raised by the communities such as siltation from development and land clearance. All panelists agreed that enforcement is needed to ensure the rivers are protected. To conclude, all panelists agreed that rivers belong to all and hence all everyone should know their river addresses and treat it well as a resource and not as drains.

## **Session 3: Community-Based Management of Forest and Coastal Habitat**

Moderator: **Dato' Lim Kee Leng**, *Senior Director of Forest Management Division, Forestry Dept. Peninsular Malaysia, Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia*

Paper presentation: **Community-Based Management of Forest and Coastal Habitat** by **Mr. Nagarajan Rengasamy**, *Manager, Forest & Coastal Programme, GEC* ([click here to view the presentation](#))

Panel discussion:

- **Dato' Dr Mohd Puat Dahalan**, *Director, Forestry Department of Selangor* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **Mr. Arsalaan Ahmed (Oz)**, *CEO, HSBC Amanah Malaysia Berhad* ([click here to view the presentation](#))
- **En. Yusman Bin Istihat**, *Chairman, Sahabat Hutan Gambut Selangor Utara*
- **Mr. Nagarajan Rengasamy**, *Manager, Forest & Coastal Programme, GEC*

### **Summary**

Dato' Dr Mohd Puat Dahalan said that peatlands rehabilitation and conservation efforts are facing challenges in terms of rapid development. The Forestry Department of Selangor is aware that establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships is very important. Mr Yusman agreed that engagement from the community is highly vital to strengthen the rehabilitation and conservation projects available. He further stated that the community itself should play their part by collaborating with relevant agencies. Mr Arsalaan suggests that one of the ways to increase the community's engagement is to change the mindset of our people. For example, we can utilize CSR programmes by realigning CSR partnerships to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). However, Mr Nagarajan Rengasamy reiterated that we cannot fully depend on the community to change our environment because rehabilitation and conservation process involves various factors that require different approaches. To conclude, all panelists agreed that while community engagement is vitally important, building partnerships with different other stakeholders while considering contributive factors are also important.

### **The Way Forward**

**Mr. Faizal Parish**, *Director of Global Environment Centre* summarized that each line of environmental protection and conservation either rivers, forests or peatlands requires concerted effort from every relevant stakeholders to achieve an impactful outcome. Everyone should play their part in taking proactive measures and collaborate with relevant agencies. Therefore, he stressed that building partnerships with every stakeholder is a vital process in environmental rehabilitation and conservation. He promised that GEC will continue to pave the road for sustainable environment and use of natural resources together with various partners. He closed the Forum by thanking everyone who attended.