

FOREWORD

In June 1997, Museum of Nature and Human Activities, Hyogo exchanged an MOU (a memorandum of understanding) with Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to help realize a "new development of international exchange," one of the priority issues addressed by the Hyogo Prefectural Government. Based on the MOU, and in the cooperation with Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation of UMS, our museum has been conducting research on the biodiversity of tropical forests of Borneo and collecting specimens of the flora and fauna.

The two institutions have been conducted ten times of scientific expeditions in the Tabin Wildlife Reserve, Crocker Range National Park, Maliau Basin Wildlife Reserve, and the Klias and Binsulok Forest Reserves, obtaining many significant achievements. It is a great pleasure to be able to present some of these achievements to the public as a special issue of the museum's English bulletin, "Tropical Biodiversity Studies."

This special issue contains six original articles and six reports. The theses cover a wide range of topics, including inventories of flora and fauna, molecular analysis for conservation of bees, and the methodology of insect inventory in tropical forests, illustrating much new and academically important knowledge and accomplishments. All of this clearly indicates that academic exchanges between the two institutions are actively being conducted and achieving ongoing success.

The MOU between the museum and UMS have brought about great achievements not only in research but also in education, including exhibitions. For example, "Borneo Jungle School," which is an eco-tourism for elementary, junior high and high school students living in Hyogo Prefecture, was conducted three times in the tropical rain forest of Danum Valley, Borneo, achieving a great success in environmental education. Moreover, the "Japan Flora 2000," an exposition on Awaji Island held by the Hyogo Prefectural Government in cooperation with UMS, attracted 5 million visitors with a pavilion for tropical rain forests, exhibiting Borneo's specimens, including the Rafflesia. After the exposition was over, the museum established a permanent exhibition section titled "Symbiotic Forests," utilizing many of the exhibits.

These academic-exchange activities, through which the museum contributes to continued research and conservation of tropical rain forests, enables the Hyogo Prefectural Government to make lasting contributions to international society as an environmentally advanced prefecture. Moreover, by returning to the prefectural government many of the benefits obtained through these activities, the museum can make meaningful contributions for the government to help realize a society that enjoys a symbiotic relationship with the global environment in the 21st century. I expect that the MOU between the two institutions will become increasingly more active and bring about even greater achievements in the future.

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Director

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