

PREFACE

Forests may be a familiar site in Malaysia but forest management could be as alien as the name of commercial trees to non-botanists or foresters, despite all that has been done in this field. Perhaps concerted educational promotion will bring the public into the forest, not so much to see the dollar signs on the big trees but to experience the serenity of God's creation away from the dust and noise polluting the cities and towns. Being in the forest, doubtlessly one would soon be conscious of the 'compactness' and complexity of the forest ecosystem emanating a glorious feeling and sense of peacefulness. We must keep alive this feeling. We must conserve the forest and preserve the complete ecosystem, not only to sustain biodiversity of the flora and fauna but also the spiritual earthly sense of belonging.

The Commonwealth Forestry Initiative: Malaysia Volume provides a summary of sorts regarding forestry in Malaysia, specially written in conjunction with the 15th Commonwealth Forestry Conference held in Zimbabwe in May 1997. A lot more could be written but it would be out of context for this exercise. The writing of this Volume actually started in October 1995 but due to unforeseen circumstances and the fact that the Conference is in May 1997 (perhaps more the latter), the facts and figures became outdated as it was being written. Further research was made to reflect the latest situation, though the authors wish to apologise if some references may still appear obsolete. Things change, as they normally do, but be rest assured that the latest available information has been used in the analysis of situations and potentials.

The theme of this Volume is Sustainable Forest Management in Malaysia. It befits past endeavours and current practice, trends and inspirations of foresters and environmentalists alike. Sustainable Forest Management has enjoyed centre-stage in numerous fora, especially since the 1980s, and it is sure to be basking in the full light of the coming 15th Commonwealth Forestry Conference and other major events across the globe, as it should. Our lives are at stake if we become too careless in managing our forests, and the greenness of the world with high forests, in particular, could be the only saviour.

It is hoped that this Volume will be useful as an update on the forestry initiatives in Malaysia, and enable readers to perceive the expectations and inspirations of a people fast moving into a developed nation through vision 2020.