

2011

December

## Some Approaches for the Conservation and Enhancement of Biodiversity in the Oil Palm Plantations in Sabah

HOONG HAK WAN

*Sawit Kinabalu Sdn Bhd, Jalan Tuaran, 88300 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah*

*Oil palm is an important crop especially to the welfare of many rural communities in this country both in terms of employment and economic activities. The extensive clearing of land for oil palm plantations will affect the biodiversity that is unique to that particular area. However, there are legislations and good agricultural practices in oil palm cultivation which promote conservation and sustainability. These include legislation to forbid any disturbances to the riparian reserve in land development. Good agricultural practices like zero-burning during land preparation stage, adopting effective soil conservation measures, planting of leguminous cover crops and beneficial plants to enhance biodiversity, integrated pest and disease management practices which promote ecological balance etc. are widely practiced among the well managed plantations. The preservation of high conservation value areas is one of the key criteria in the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil certification. To achieve zero discharge from the production of palm oil, mill by-products like empty fruit bunches and palm oil mill effluents are recycled back to the field as a source of plant nutrient. The industry in collaboration with universities and other stakeholders like WWF have initiated various researches on biodiversity conservation and also rehabilitation programme for some of the degraded land to reverse them back to jungle.*

**Keywords:** *Conservation, biodiversity, sustainability, good agricultural practices, rehabilitation.*

