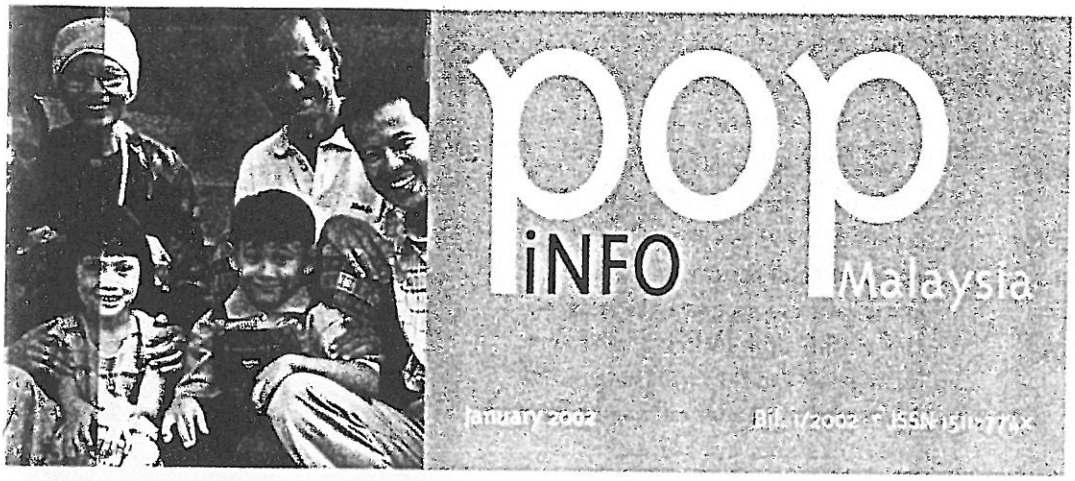

LEMBAGA PENDUDUK DAN PEMBANGUNAN KELUARGA NEGARA, MALAYSIA
Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita dan Keluarga

NATIONAL POPULATION AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT BOARD, MALAYSIA
Ministry of Women and Family Development

POPULATION, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The UN International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 adopted the ICPD Programme of Action. It noted that demographic factors combined with poverty and lack of access to resources and excessive consumption as well as wasteful production, contribute to environmental degradation and resources depletion thus inhibiting sustainable development.

In this regard, Malaysia has takens steps to contribute to the global efforts in mitigating environmental degradation. At the international level, Malaysia is party to many environmental agreements namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC, 1992), Agenda 21 (1992), the Basel Convention on Hazardous Waste, and the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances (1987).

We are actively carrying out programmes to fulfill our commitments and obligations towards these Agreements. Conservation measures to protect our biological resources were implemented and a National Policy on Biological Diversity has been put in place. It is Malaysia's policy that our forest cover is at least 50 percent of its land area (presently at about 56 percent). We have also completed our Initial National Communication under the UNFCC, which provides national inventories on green house gases and strategies to be pursued for their reduction and measures to address its impact.

Many projects were carried out in the industrial sector to reduce the consumption of ozone depleting substances. An integrated hazardous waste disposal centre was established.

Steps have also been taken to ensure that the various programmes under Agenda 21 are implemented to ensure sustainable development. To this effect, an integrated environmental consideration was introduced into the development process through National Development Plans.

In accordance with the commitment to sustainable development, measures are taken to include the impact of development on the environment into the National Development Plans. In addition to this, at the micro level, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a mandatory requirement in the project planning process.

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This EIA also addresses socio-economic concerns including poverty. The concern on the impact of development on population is further strengthened with the on-going study to introduce Social Impact Assessment (SIA) in the project planning process.

It is evident that population growth adds pressure to the environment. Each additional individual on this planet would demand food, water and all the other essentials of life, which can only be met by making the most of the environment. The challenge is to meet the demands of the population which is not only increasing but also more affluent. Sustainable development has to ensure that permanent damage to the environment is avoided over the long run, or at least strictly limited. It will necessarily demand, at the macro level, better integration of population factors within the overall development planning process. At the micro level, a better understanding of the linkages between population, environment and sustainable development among the active actors of the society is crucial.

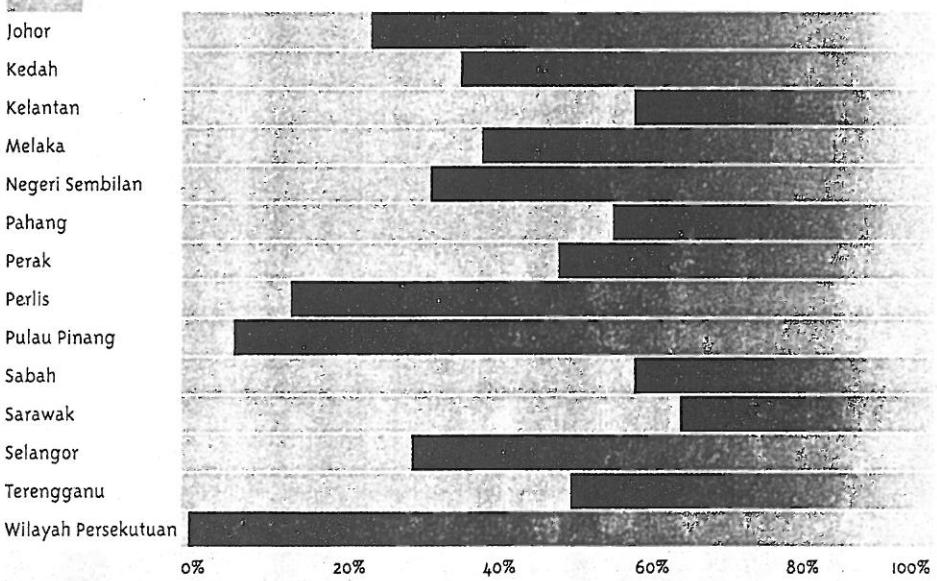
In line with its commitment to Agenda 21, various Government agencies, non-governmental organisations and private bodies have implemented environmental education, training and awareness programmes under the stewardship of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment. The Government has adopted a long-term strategy to carry out environmental education through a multi-disciplinary approach aimed at increasing awareness, understanding and love for the environment.

Towards this end, the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) under the Ministry of Women and Family Development has developed two training modules.

- **Population and Development**
- **Population, Environment and Development.** These modules are currently being used to orientate planners and programme managers of development-related agencies and NGOs.

Issues pertaining to sustainable development will be further deliberated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held from 26th August to 4th September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Percentage of **forested** and **unforested** land by state, Malaysia, 2000



Source: Forestry Department, Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak

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NEXT ISSUE:

Reproductive Health
Special Reference to
HIV/AIDS

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