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Preface

Tens of thousands of islands are scattered across the confluence of the West Pacific and the Indian on the equatorial belt. The islands and Malay Peninsula the area called the Malay Archipelago, where tropical rainforests known as a treasury of biodiversity in the terrestrial system are distributed. In the tropical rainforests, extremely species-rich organisms have evolved in their own particular ways and the fauna and flora show an enormously large regional variation. Sarawak is located in Borneo, one of the core areas of tropical rainforests with such diverse biotic community.

A. R. Wallace, a great researcher of natural history who is famous for devising the theory of evolution by natural selection around the same time when C. R. Darwin devised it, had experience of exploring tropical rainforests of Sarawak in the mid 19th. The fauna and flora that he faced and the biogeographical variation are inferred to have considerably influenced in formulating the evolutionary theory. Since then, many researchers and many research projects have investigated various kinds of organisms in the tropical rainforests in Sarawak for the development of study of natural history, biogeography, phylogenetic systematics, evolutionary biology, community ecology, etc. Although their research activities in Sarawakian tropical rainforests have made important progression such academic fields, very important and interesting issues in tropical biology and ecology remained to be studied in the late 20th century.

In 1990, an international joint research project was organized by the Forest Department Sarawak (FDS), Harvard University, Center for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS) and a Japanese university organization consisting mainly of Ehime University, Osaka City University and Kyoto University. The project started to built up the field station with several facilities, such as the 50-ha (later 52-ha) plot for long-term every tree survey and the aerial walk-ways for survey in the forest canopy, in Lambir Hills National Park. Since 1991, this collaborating project has tackled various issues in studies of natural history, ecology and meteorology in the tropical rainforests by using such facilities.

The research collaborations between the scientists of Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) and Japan Research Consortium for Tropical Forests (JRCTF) have continued for more than 20 years. In November 2012, both parties have agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue the research collaboration. The MOU is aimed to enforce the collaboration in research work, to develop the capacity building of the research sections in FDS, and to provide more opportunities for education of the FDS staff.

This proceeding is a compilation of findings and progress activities of research collaboration between the Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) and the Japan Research Consortium for Tropical Forests in Sarawak (JRCTS). To highlight the research findings, An International Symposium entitled “Frontier in Tropical Forest Research: Progress in Joint Projects between the Forest Department Sarawak and the Japan Research Consortium for Tropical Forests in Sarawak” was

held in Kuching, Sarawak on 21–22 September 2015.

A total of twenty-three oral papers and 18 posters were presented in the symposium. The papers were presented in three sessions based on research subjects namely: Ecology and genetics of tropical rainforest trees in Sarawak, Progress and prospects for studies on diversity of fungi, insects and vertebrates in Sarawak and Biogeoscience in a tropical rainforest in Sarawak. The symposium was attended by more than 80 participants from the Sarawak's state agencies and representatives from JRCTF.

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