RESOURCES

EUROPE UNFAIR IN CONDEMNING OUR CLEARING OF JUNGLES

RECENTLY, Malaysia was chastised for the so-called destruction of forests to replace them with oil palm, rubber and durian trees.

This had, said critics, deprived the world of oxygen and rainwater and contributed to the acceleration of climate change.

This is unfair as all the above are originally jungle trees.

The oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) is an African jungle tree, the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) is a Brazilian jungle tree while the durian tree (*Durio zibethinus*) is a Malaysian jungle tree.

Over the years, Malaysia has planted billions of these wonderful trees and instead of condemning us, they should be congratulating us for planting these trees.

Malaysia is covered by about 54 per cent of virgin jungles and this is much more than most of the countries in Europe.

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In fact, most of the countries in Europe have cleared their forests and benefited from the sale of timber.

However, instead of replacing the land with trees, they turn them into fields of wheat and other crops.

Fields of grass for cows and sheep are in no way as good as our rubber and oil palm trees.

On top of that, the huge herds of sheep and cattle produce vast quantities of methane, which is about four times more effective as a greenhouse gas.

Our rubber, oil palm and durian trees are just as effective as any jungle tree in absorbing carbon dioxide and harmful gases, such as sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide, from the air and, in turn, release oxygen and water.

Our plantations of trees, which are originally from the jungle, provide food, rubber, timber and employment for hundreds of thousands of people in Malaysia and the rest of the world.

So to condemn us for being greedy in clearing our jungles and to apply sanctions on our palm oil is unfair.

It is, in fact, a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black.

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