(1) The Heart of Borneo: Present and Future, Challenges and Prospects

**(2) Conveners:**

Dr. Merry K. Sipahutar, Balikpapan University (merry.k@uniba-bpn.ac.id)

Dr. Rosnah Abdullah, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (rosnah.abdullah@ubd.edu.bn)

Madam Noraziah Abdul Wahab, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

(normah.abdullatip@ums.edu.my)

**(3) Format**

We plan to conduct a double-session panel to showcase the multilateral platforms for regional and sub-regional cooperation in The Heart of Borneo (HoB). We aim to present a comparative analysis of the various disciplinary approaches, locations, and resources employed on HoB. We intend to use this panel to establish a joint research agenda for monitoring the current challenges of HoB and to involve a larger group of researchers. With a double session, we can accommodate more researchers and provide a comprehensive and up-to-date view of the situation at HoB.

(4) **Panel**

The panels comprised representative of academics and professionals from various governmental and private institutions that are expert in their fields, who will discuss and contribute in various issues described in the abstract. They foresee this panel session as a gateway to share and explore relevant issues pertaining HoB.

**Abstract**

HoB refers to the island's central region, where lush tropical forests remain intact, containing approximately 6% of the world's biodiversity. Spanning an area of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, it is one of Earth's most significant remaining transboundary rainforests. The HoB is not only a precious storehouse of biodiversity; it also plays a vital role in sustaining the lives and livelihoods of at least 23 million Borneans, including the indigenous Dayak people who call the forest home.

Industrial developments such as coal mines, oil palm plantations, electric power production and logging concessions pose significant threats to the biodiversity and ecosystems of the region. These practices also affect the region's resilience to climate change, the value of the ecosystem goods and services used as inputs in multiple sectors of Borneo's economy, and the survival of local communities. Furthermore, the HoB is facing challenges that have grown increasingly complex due to the relocation of Indonesia's new capital, political tensions between the Malaysian federal government and the states of Sabah and Sarawak, and moderate diversification of economic affairs in Brunei.

Our panel is focused on exploring the current and future challenges and prospects facing the HoB region, and we invite contributions that address this issue through one or more of the following approaches: 1. How does economic development impact the HoB and the people residing in the region? 2. What regional and sub-regional policies are in place to safeguard the HoB's resilience to climate change? 3. How can Borneo achieve sustainability on food and energy security? 4. How the HoB increase the economic potential of the Indonesian archipelago sea line (ALKI II)? 5. How to maintain Borneo as the lungs of the world? 6. How to encourage increased interconnectivity on Borneo Island?