

Unesco declares Kinabalu National Geopark as a Global Geopark

By Paul Mu - May 26, 2023 @ 10:25am

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah has achieved a remarkable feat by being recognised as a Unesco Triple Crown site, making it only the third place in the world to receive such a prestigious distinction.

This recognition followed the declaration of the Kinabalu National Geopark as the Kinabalu Unesco Global Geopark, announced by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor today.

Sabah now proudly stands alongside Jeju Island in Korea and Shennongjia in China as the only places with three Unescosites.

The decision was made by Unesco's Executive Board in Paris on May 24.

Kinabalu Park's other two Unesco "crowns" are the World Heritage Site (declared on Dec 2, 2000) and the Unesco Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve (declared on June 12, 2014).

"This is a significant achievement for the state government under its Hala Tuju Sabah Maju Jaya initiatives through the Tourism, Culture, and Environment Ministry and Sabah Parks," said Chief Minister Hajiji.

"The Kinabalu Unesco Global Geopark, covering an area of 4,750 square kilometers, is now officially a Global Geotourism destination, adding significant value to Sabah's existing eco-tourism products.

"The Geopark is home to many endemic plants and animals, including 90 orchid species found only on Mount Kinabalu.

"This includes the crimson-headed partridge bird, which is not found anywhere else on earth, and it will bring direct and indirect benefits to Sabah's socioeconomy, particularly to more than 290,000 local communities within the districts of Kota Belud, Kota Marudu, and Ranau," he added.

With the declaration of the Kinabalu National Geopark as a Unesco Global Geopark, there are now 195 geoparks in the world located in 48 countries.

The Unesco Global Geopark label recognises the geological heritage of international significance.

Geoparks serve local communities by combining the conservation of their significant geological heritage with public outreach and a sustainable approach to development.