

Segama River, Sabah: Community Engagement Report

1.0 Introduction

The Department of Irrigation and Drainage's (DID) has started an initiative to mainstream the conservation of biodiversity into river management in three catchments across Malaysia, including the Segama River, Sabah with funding from United Nations Development Program. The plan is to engage communities and the private sector living along the river in the monitoring and conservation of riparian biodiversity. Forever Sabah has been engaged to implement this Segama River component.

In order to kickstart the initiative, Forever Sabah representatives arranged to meet with the ten local communities living along Segama River in the period 18-20 May for the upper Middle Segama and 31 May 2020 to 8th June 8, 2020 for the Lower Middle Segama. The aim of these visits was to obtain further information on the real-life report on their current situation and the conditions along the river. During these visits we were only able to engage with the village heads from nine of the villages that will be involved in organised trainings that are part of the initiative and undertake the first stage of FPIC (Free Prior and Informed Consent) for their participation in this project.

The ten villages identified are listed below and illustrated on the enclosed map:-

- a) Kampung Upak;
- b) Kampung Tawaiyari;
- c) Kampung Pendising;
- d) Kampung Lituk Pulau;
- e) Kampung Bukit Balacon;
- f) Kampung Sapadulang;
- g) Kampung Segama Lama/Batu 8;
- h) Kampung Dagat;
- i) Kampung Tidung; and
- j) Kampung Litang

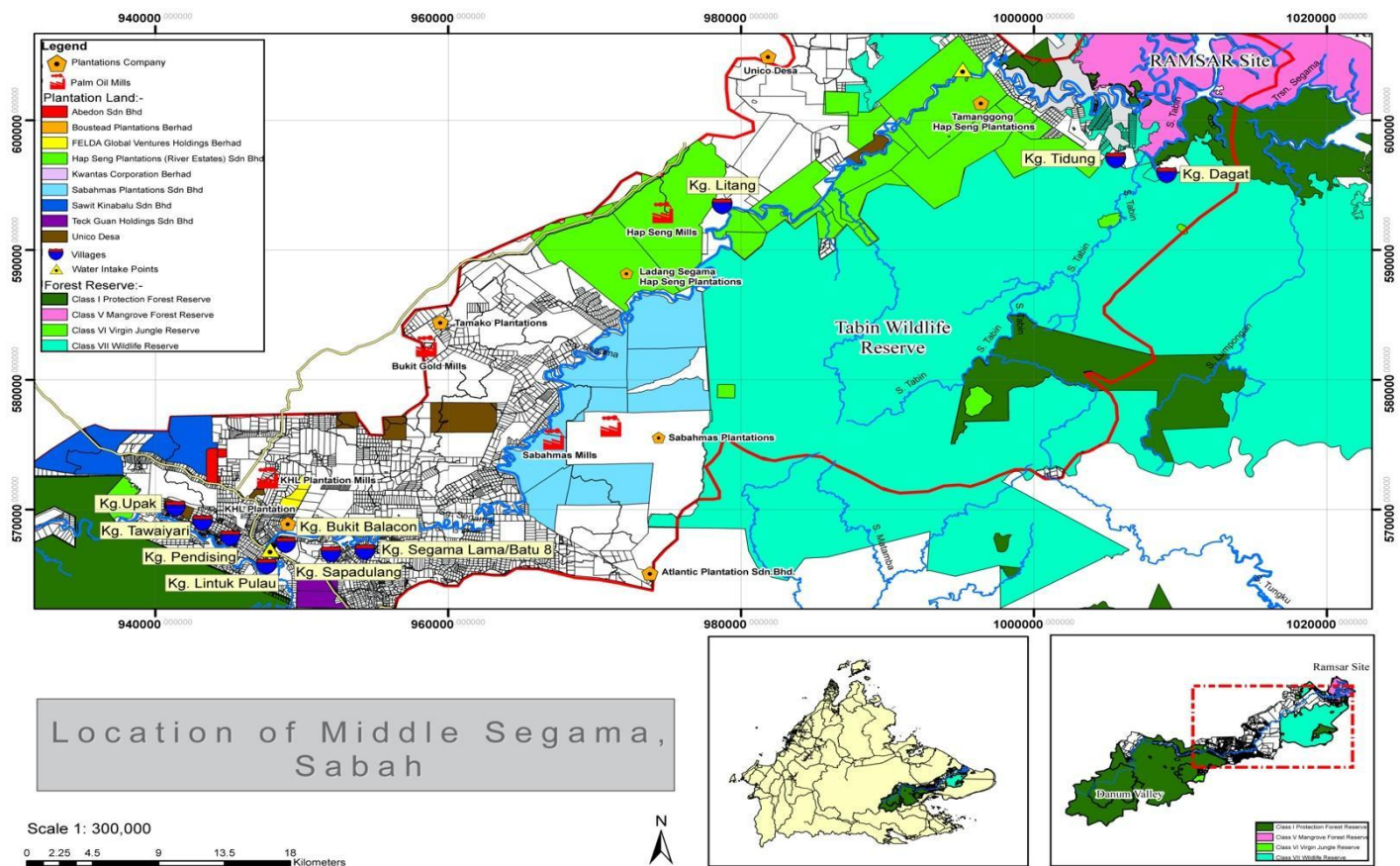


Figure 1 Mapping along Middle Segama, Sabah

This report will further discuss the profiles of the respective villages, such as their socioeconomic activities, existing utilities, and also the current issues that they and the River Segama are facing in their neighbourhood.

2.0 Village Profiles

Village (Population)	District	Land Title and Land Use	Socioeconomic Activities	Ethnicity and Religion	Migration Background	Utilities
Kampung Upak (c. 350)	Lahad Datu	• Mostly titled land (Native Title) • Palm oil plantation • Fruit trees (durian, langsung, jackfruit, mangoes) • Swiftlet farming	• Self-employed (rubber, palm oil, fishermen) • Civil servants • Private sector employees • Small-scale traders • Swiftlet farming	• Dusun Subpan • Christian (Anglican, True Jesus, and Basel Church)	Original to this area	• Electricity • Gravel road • Access to telephone signal • Community hall • Rainwater harvesting or collecting water from Segama River
Kampung Tawaiyari (c. 1,500)	Lahad Datu	• Mostly titled land (Native Title) • Palm oil plantation • Fruit trees (durian, langsung, jackfruit, mangoes) • Swiftlet farming	• Self-employed (rubber, palm oil, fishermen) • Civil servants • Private sector employees • Small-scale traders • Swiftlet farming	• Dusun Subpan • Christian (Anglican, True Jesus, and Basel Church)	Original to this area	• Electricity • Gravel road • Access to telephone signal • Community hall • Rainwater harvesting or collecting water from Segama River • Primary school
Kampung Pendising (c. 350)	Lahad Datu	• Mostly titled land (Native Title) • Palm oil plantation • Fruit trees (durian, langsung, jackfruit, mangoes) • Swiftlet farming	• Self-employed (palm oil, fishermen) • Civil servants • Private sector employees • Small-scale traders • Swiftlet farming	• Dusun Subpan • Christian (Anglican, True Jesus, and Basel Church)	Original to this area	• Electricity • Gravel road • Access to telephone signal • Community hall • Rainwater harvesting or collecting water from Segama River
Kampung Lituk Pulau (c. 600)	Lahad Datu	• Palm oil plantation • Fruit trees (durian, langsung, jackfruit, mangoes) • Rubber plantation • Goat husbandry • Palm and fruits nursery • Swiftlet farming	• Self-employed (palm oil, fishermen) • Civil servants • Private sector employees • Small-scale traders • Swiftlet farming	• Dusun Subpan • Muslim • Christian (Anglican, True Jesus, and Basel Church)	Original to this area	• Electricity • Gravel road • Access to telephone signal • Community hall • Rainwater harvesting or collecting water from Segama River

Village (Population)	District	Land Title and Land Use	Socioeconomic Activities	Ethnicity and Religion	Migration Background	Utilities
Kampung Bukit Balacon (c. 3,000)	Lahad Datu	Mostly titled land (Native Title)	- Self-employed (palm oil) - Civil servants - Private sector employees - Small-scale traders	- Dusun Subpan - Christian (Catholic, Anglican, True Jesus, and Basel Church)	- Originally from Kg. Upak - Migrated for school	- Electricity - Tar road - Access to telephone signal - Treated water by Sabah Water Department - Primary and secondary school
Kampung Sapadulang (c. 350)	Lahad Datu	- Most titled lands have been sold to outsiders - Some of the land is anticipated to be gazetted as Tanah Jabatan Pertanian - Palm oil plantation - Swiftlet farming	- Self-employed (palm oil, fishermen) - Civil servants - Private sector employees - Small-scale traders - Swiftlet farming	- Dusun Subpan - Butuun (Indonesia) - Idaan - Bajau - Timur (Flores Indonesia) - Muslim - Christian	- A few people are original to this area - Majority of them are from Indonesia and Philippines (born around the 1940s)	- Electricity - Tar road - Access to telephone signal - Treated water by Sabah Water Department - Agriculture Vocational School - Technic Secondary School <i>Koperasi</i> <i>Pembangunan Desa</i> (office)
Kampung Segama Lama/Batu 8 (c. 500)	Lahad Datu	- Palm oil plantation - Fruit trees (durian, langsung, jackfruit, mangoes) - Rubber plantation	- Self-employed (palm oil, fishermen) - Civil servants - Private sector employees	- Idaan - Muslim	- Some of the villagers moved from Kinabatangan - Migrated for paddy and tobacco activities near Batu 8	- Electricity - Tar road - Access to telephone signal - Community hall
Kampung Dagat (c. 242)	Kinabatangan	- Kampung Reserve with approval from LUC meeting and awaiting to be gazetted as Native Title - Fruit trees (durian, langsung, jackfruit, mangoes and other fruit trees) - Vegetables for own consumption - Swiftlet farming	- Fishermen (main source of income) - Sport fishing (private operator) - Eco-Tourism (Homestay activities) - Civil servants - Private sector employees (RELA and <i>Polis Bantuan</i>) - Swiftlet farming	95% Tidung - Others consist of Sungai, Bugis, Suluk and Bajau) - Muslim	- Originally from Labuk, Beluran - Migrated to Segama River around the 1950s - Migrated to current village around the 1980s	- Electricity (mostly using generator and solar power) - Gravel road - Access to telephone signal (Digi and Celcom only) - Community hall - Rainwater harvesting or collecting water

						from Segama River
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Village (Population)	District	Land Title and Land Use	Socioeconomic Activities	Ethnicity and Religion	Migration Background	Utilities
Kampung Litang (c. 248)	Kinabatangan	- Native Title - Most households own their own land - Smallholders of palm oil plantation - Fruit trees (durian, rambutan, mangoes, banana and other fruit trees) - Vegetable plantations (corns, chillies and bananas) for own consumption - Swiftlet farming	- Fishermen (main source of income) - Self-employed (palm oil) - Civil servants - Swiftlet farming	95% Sungai Sugut 5% Sungai Idaan - Muslim	The oldest village on the Segama River, existing since late 1800s	- Electricity (generator) - Gravel road - Access to telephone signal - Primary school - Community hall - Rainwater harvesting or collecting water from Segama River
Kampung Tidung (c. 270)	Kinabatangan	- Kampung Reserve - Some land is private owned by some families - Smallholders of palm oil plantation - Fruit trees (durian, rambutan, mangoes, banana and other fruit trees) - Vegetables for own consumption - Swiftlet farming	- Fishermen (main source of income) 5 families are Self-employed (palm oil) - Private sector employees (RELA, <i>Poliis Bantuan</i>, and Hap Seng) - Swiftlet farming	96% Tidung 4% is Dusun, Sungai and Bugis - Muslim	- Originally from Labuk, Beluran and migrated to Segama River around the 1950s - Migrated to current settlement around the late 1990s	- Electricity (using solar hybrid) - Gravel road - Access to telephone signal 4G internet (Digi and Celcom) - Primary school - Community hall (not well maintained) - Rainwater harvesting or collecting water from Segama River

3.0 Issues

3.1 Access to Clean Water

Some villages have no access to treated tap water, while other villages north of Segama River have no forest from which to access quality gravity fed water supplies. As tabled above, a majority of the villagers use harvested rainwater and Segama River water for daily use.



Figure 2 Rainwater harvesting in Kg. Pendising



Figure 3 Villagers collect water from Segama River to be used for cooking and washing

Due to being highly dependent on Segama River as their source of water, the villagers along it face yet another issue: polluted water sources. Erosion in watersheds from hill cutting, roads, agriculture and other human activities has led to flooding, silt loads and poor water quality. There has also been sand and gold mining activities in Segama River, which has worsened siltation and also possibly introduced persistent heavy metal (mercury) poisoning. (We still need to determine if mercury is used to separate and extract gold by these miners.)



Figure 4 There are reportedly four (4) sand mining and three (3) gold mining operations in Segama River



*Figure 5 (Left) Villagers bathing and playing near the mining machinery
(Right) Water collected by villagers from Segama River*

It has also been reported by the villagers that palm oil workers use agricultural poisons to catch prawns and fishes in the river, which in addition to possible health risks also in turn damages the wider fishery. Large scale Palm Oil plantations have also often encroached upon sections of riparian reserves.

3.2 Socio-Economic Activities

A majority of the villagers are dependent on palm oil as their livelihood – either by being smallholders or by working with existing palm oil companies. For smallholders, their struggle lies on the fact that the Fresh Fruit Bunch (FFB) price is often low, in addition to their plantation having low productivity for a variety of reasons, including

due to the palm oil trees being old. Smallholders also do not have MSPO certificates and feel they have no means to achieve RSPO standards.



Figure 6 Palm oil smallholder plantation in one of the villages

Other than palm oil plantation, villagers are also dependent on fishing to support their livelihoods. However, this has also been impacted by water quality and over-fishing. In addition to that, the traditional fishing grounds have also been encroached by the commercial fishing industry.



Figure 7 A fisherman using net to catch freshwater prawn

While the villagers do plant fruit trees and vegetables for own consumption, some are unable to practice agriculture due to human-wildlife conflict (elephants, wild boars and monkeys) in their areas. Most of the villages are, however, are operating swiftlet farming (which is a promising new source of income diversification)



Figure 8 Pineapples planted by the communities for home use



Figure 9 Some of the swiftlet houses that belong to the villagers (private owned)

3.3 Social Issues

The communities along Segama River are mainly Indigenous. The villages of the Upper Middle Segama are Dusun Subpan peoples, whilst the oldest village on the river, Kg. Litang are mainly Orang Segama, and the villages of the Lower Segama are primarily Tidung. The community at Sapadulang, is very mixed between Indigenous and migrant Sabahans and people descended from early migrants from Indonesia (especially Flores and Buutun).

Amongst the social issues that the villagers face within their communities are village boundaries which have not been properly identified, leading to conflicts on land ownership. There are also some leadership friction between village heads and the Village Community Management Council (MPKK), in addition some said that appointed village heads are not being respected by their communities.

Land is held in these villages in a variety of ways, including under Native Titles. In some of the villages much of the land is reported to have been sold to many layers of owners outside the villages.



Figure 10 (Top and Bottom) Meeting with some of the village heads and MPKK



3.4 Poor Road Infrastructure and Public Amenities

Like most areas in the interior of Sabah, a majority of the villages have gravel and unpaved roads. In some cases public amenities such as community halls have been claimed by individuals and converted for private uses – this may be due to lack of collective ownership of public facilities. Some villages do not even have a community hall.



Figure 11 Gravel and unpaved road in one of the villages



Figure 12 Some communities use boats for transportation as well – they travel to other areas along the Segama River



Figure 13 A community hall (left) and a jetty (right)

*Figure 14
Another
community
hall in one
of the
villages*

