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Alternative material to replace timber: FRIM

KOTA KINABALU: The Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) will showcase new alternative raw material that could replace timber, which is short in supply presently, at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF).

The FRIM will present these raw material or feedstock, which have been researched and found not only to be suitable but interesting for consideration in the industry, at the event in the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur from Mar 2-6.

At the event, the FRIM will also highlight various technologies and services it has to offer to help the industry add value or differentiation to their products and/or reduce production costs.

"Furniture is one of the major exports of our wood-based sector," FRIM's Advanced Processing and Design Programme Head, Dr Tan Yu Eng said, before adding, "over the years, there has been steady increase in our export value to a tune of about RM8 billion in 2008."

"Amidst the economic slump and stiffer competition in the global market due to emerging low-cost producers, efforts are being considered to upgrade the value chain.

"One possible way is by means differentiation through the use of different material or feedstock. This will also help to alleviate the material shortage problem encountered by the wood-based industries in general, furniture sector in particular."

Meanwhile, he said the FRIM also welcomed interested parties to jointly evaluate the viability of these material under commercial environment.

Tan will make a presentation entitled "Carving a Niche in New Input Material at the PWTC on Thursday.

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