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Timber industry needs to buck up

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's timber-based industry needs to increase value addition to sustain its income and contribution to the national economy, Deputy Natural Resources and Environment Minister Tan Sri Joseph Kurup said this morning.

"Being a resource based industry, any decline or change in the supply of raw materials will directly affect the export of Malaysian timber-based products," said Kurup in his speech at the launch of the International Symposium on Forestry and Forest Products 2010 (ISFFP) at Legend Hotel here.

"We should continue to develop and adopt better strategies and more effective approaches when addressing issues and challenges that affect this industry," he said.

"The export earning is falling behind the year-to-year target. Innovative R&D (research and development) initiatives in appropriate areas need to intensified to address multiple issues and challenges."

Organised by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), the three-day symposium is being attended by 350 participants, including industry leaders, stakeholders, scientists and expert, from at least 10 countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, the United States, Japan and India.

The theme of this year's ISFFP is "Addressing Global Concerns and Changing Societal Needs."

There will be four parallel sessions in the Symposium, namely: Forestry, Forest Plantation and Biodiversity; Forest Products and Social-Economics; Biotechnology and Medicinal Plants; and Climate Change.