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# Call to raise timber product value

**Koi Kye Lee**

THE Malaysian timber-based industry has been urged to introduce products of higher value as the international trade is becoming more competitive and demanding.

Natural Resources and Environment Deputy Minister Tan Sri Joseph Kurup urged those in the industry to respond to the global changes and to guide the industry towards sustenance and competitiveness.

"Products of higher value should be introduced through innovations, new designs, with more efficient processing and usage of re-

newable resources while fulfilling stringent consumer requirements for product specifications to remain competitive in the international market," he said.

Kurup was speaking after opening the International Symposium on Forestry and Forest Products 2010 (ISFFP) yesterday.

He said besides working towards meeting the international market's demand for environmentally friendly products, there is an urgent need to increase value to the product chain in order to sustain the income and contribution of the sector to the national economy.

The timber industry is one of the major revenue contributors and it has provided employment to about 300,000 workers.

In 2009, timber and its by-products contributed RM19.5 billion in exports.

The three-day symposium, with the theme "Addressing Global Concerns and Changing Societal Needs", is a platform for foreign delegates to discuss subjects such as forestry, forest products and climate change.

The participants are from Japan, Thailand, Zimbabwe, Iran, India, Turkey, the Philippines, Sudan, Singapore and the US.