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FRIM's creation for Spogagafa

Modular outdoor furniture to be displayed at German trade fair

THE Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) will showcase one of its innovative furniture products, namely Modular Outdoor Furniture, at Spogagafa 2012, the largest garden trade fair held annually in Cologne, Germany, this September.

The product will be showcased by Supreme Tropical Furniture Sdn Bhd (STFSB), a local manufacturer and exporter of timber garden products to various countries and regions including the United Kingdom, Europe, USA and Australia.

The signing of an option agreement between FRIM and STFSB, which will allow the furniture company to evaluate the marketability of this product within one year, was held recently at FRIM's exhibition site at the Putrajaya Floria 2012 in Putrajaya.

Representing the Malaysian Forestry Research and Development Board (MFRDB) was FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod, while STFSB was represented by its director Choo Ghee Kien.

According to Abd Latif, the modular outdoor furniture designs are protected by the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) under Industrial Design category.

This set of innovative furniture was designed by FRIM researchers

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— DATUK DR ABD LATIF MOHMOD

Nik Adlin Nik Mohamed Sukri and Dr Wan Tarmeze Wan Ariffin who were tasked to develop and promote mangrove timber as a material for making furniture.

Due to its high density, furniture made from mangrove timber can be very heavy especially if the product is huge such as a three-seater bench.

To overcome this problem, FRIM researchers incorporated modularity concept in the product design which enables several one-seater chairs to be put next to the others and function like a two- or three-seater bench. Hence, each chair unit is light enough to be handled by a person.

This innovation won a Gold Medal for FRIM at the recent ITEX' 12 (23rd



Joint venture: (From left) Mohd Zamshari, Wan Tarmeze, Nik Adlin, Abd Latif, Choo, Chong and STFSB assistant marketing executive Ang Wei May posing for picture after the option agreement signing ceremony.

International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition) held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Choo, who has participated in Spogagafa since 2009, said his interest in modular outdoor furniture was sparked when he saw the product displayed at the Malaysian

International Furniture Fair (MIFF) in March 2011.

He believes the product could sell well because modularity concept is gaining popularity in the outdoor furniture industry.

Choo plans to use several local timber species to manufacture the

furniture with "state-of-art" finishing technology.

Also present to witness the signing ceremony were FRIM innovation and commercialisation division director Mohd Zamshari Abd Rahman, STFSB operations manager Chong Shee Kon.