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Promoting alternative raw materials to timber

BY GOH PEI PEI

KOTA SAMARAHAN: The Rubber Wood, Acacia, Palm and Other Pilot Species Seminar (GAPPS 2012) jointly organised by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) will be held at Pullman Hotel here on 19 and 20 November.

According to FRIM Director of Forest Product Division Dr Rahim Sudin, the event is aimed at promoting and exploring the use of alternatives to naturally-grown pioneer species as raw materials for the production of wood-based products.

He told a press conferences at Unimas yesterday, that the timber related-industry was an important source of income for Malaysia over the past decades, with exports amounting to about RM20 billion per annum.

However he said, the industry would face shortage in supply of quality timber in the near future due to the increasing importance and priority given to the conservation of forests and environment.

"Fortunately, there are many lesser-known species and agricultural by-products that can be used as alternatives to supple-



(FROM LEFT) STIDC Deputy General Manager Hashim Bojet, FRIM Director Dr Rahim Sudin, Unimas Institute of Design Director Prof Dr Khairul Aidil Azlin Abdul Rahman and Assistant Registrar Norhamimah Buang unveiling the 'GAPPS 2012' banner. PHOTO: JOHN CHAN

ment current requirements by wood-based industries.

"Various research and development (R&D) initiatives by local universities and research institutions have successfully identified wood-based products that can be produced from these alternative resources which could help to reduce the industry's dependence on forest timbers and the rate of

deforestation," Rahim pointed out.

He revealed the seminar would present research and development results on the commercialisation of rubber, palm, acacia and other wood species as alternatives for the timber industry in the future.

A total of 18 papers will be presented by FRIM, Unimas, STIDC, Sarawak Forest Department,

Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Malaysian Timber Council, Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board at the seminar.

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Dato Sri Douglas Uggah Embas had been invited to officiate at the opening of the seminar on 19 November.