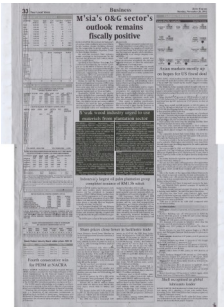


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S'wak wood industry urged to use materials from plantation sector

KUCHING: Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Unggah Embas has urged Sarawak's wood industry to use alternative raw materials from the plantation sector to reduce the dependence on natural resources.

He said the wood industry is among the important sources of income in Sarawak with the sector's contribution to the state's exports in 2011 being RM7.4 billion.

"This figure is 37 per cent of Malaysia's wood exports. As such, efforts need to be made to find alternative sources, to reduce the dependence on the supply of wood from natural forests," he added.

He said this in his speech while officiating the Rubber Wood, Palm and Other Pilot Species Seminar Sarawak 2012: Potential Sources for Sarawak Wood Industry, here Monday.

The text of his speech was read by the Chairman of the Malaysian Forest Research Development Board (MFRDB), Nancy Shukri.

Also present was the Director General of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia

(Frim), Datuk Dr Abdul Latiff Mahmood.

Meanwhile, Abdul Latiff said Malaysia had the means to become the main exporter of wood products from palm trunks.

He said for a start, Malaysia can export plywood made from oil palm trunks.

"The price for plywood processed from oil palm trunks is in the range of between RM300 to RM400 cubic meters and is expected to increase over the long term," he told reporters after the seminar's opening.

Elaborating further, he said the rubber tree, acacia, palm and pioneer species have high commercial value and are suited for export.

"The export of wood from trees on plantations is among Malaysia's efforts to conserve and manage forest resources on a sustainable manner," he added.

Abdul Latiff said the protocol and international standards for wood exports is becoming increasingly stringent.

"For example, from 2013, all wood exports globally need certification to proof it came from forests that are sustainably managed," he added. - Bernama