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## 'Timber players need new resources to stay afloat'

**KUCHING:** Timber industry players need new resources from forest and agricultural plantations to ensure the sustainability of the industry.

The new resources could come in the form of oil palm biomass, bamboo and rattan, said Dr Mohd Nor Mohd Yusoff, deputy director-general of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) at Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCCK) yesterday.

"The industry should also seek more efficient and eco friendlier processing of high-valued products to ensure industry competitiveness," he said in his paper 'The Potential Utilisation of Fast Growing Species from Planted Forest' at the Sarawak Grand Timber Expo and Conference.

On the planted forest timber industry, he said the players were up against various challenges.

"The replanting timber industry is up against various challenges such as escalating operational price due to instability and increase in the price of world crude oil."

Other challenges include limited

availability of raw materials, labour force, climate change, green house emissions, market constraints due to the need to comply with stricter international standards, and competition from emerging economies.

He later showed various products that were developed from planted forest timber such as indoor strips, decking strips, garden furniture, wood base panels, pulp and paper.

Among the species grown in Sarawak for its planted forest as of 2011 are Acacia Mangium, Eucalyptus, Neolamarckia Cadamba, Paraserianthes Falcataria and Hevea Barsiliensis, he said.

On another matter, he said FRIM hoped to become a certification and testing body for wood-based products that meet international standards to ensure Malaysia's wood-based products remain competitive in the global market.

This is among many initiatives which FRIM and other related agencies and industry players are working together for the betterment of the timber industry.