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# Utilising the planted forest

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**T**he Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) has identified several ways to utilise fast-growing species of timber in planted forests.

Dr Mohd Nor Mohd Yusoff, deputy director general of FRIM noted that wood are greatly used in countless of things which include building construction, flooring, interior finishing and other uses.

In Malaysia, the wood-based sector is seen as thriving on the back of its export values which is reported to have more than RM20 billion, he pointed out.

In spite of that, Dr Mohd Nor said, there is a shortage in wood supply driven by competition from other types of downstream products and increasing demands of the wood products.

He pointed out that FRIM had determined several fast growing timber species, several of which are suitable to be planted in Sarawak's rich tropical forest.

Several species which FRIM had named are *Acacia mangium* (including *Acacia* hybrid), *Tectona grandis*, *Khaya ivorensis*, *Khaya senegalensis*, Rubberwood (5 clones), *Azadirachta excelsa*, *Paraserianthes falcataria*,

*"High-valued products from more efficient and ecofriendly processing could lead to industry competitiveness."*

**Dr Mohd Nor Mohd Yusoff, FRIM deputy director general**

*Neolamarckia cadamba* and *Octomeles sumatrana*.

Dr Mohd Nor noted that *Octomeles sumatrana* and *Eucalyptus* are fast-growing timber ideal for Sarawak and Sabah planters. He also highlighted that the *Acacia mangium* has been identified as the most favourable forest species for its fast growth feature.

According to Sarawak Planted Forest Sdn Bhd, *Acacia mangium*'s growth rate and yield in seven years is 26 cubic metre per hectare, per year. Also, in seven years, the *Acacia mangium* has a total standing volume of 177.40 cubic metre, per hectare.

Other than sustainable fast growing timber species, Dr Mohd Nor encouraged wood-based industries to look for other alternate

raw resources such as agricultural plantations (for example; oil palm biomass, bamboo and rattan).

"High-valued products from more efficient and ecofriendly processing could lead to industry competitiveness," he pointed out.

Looking ahead, on the prospects of the timber industry, STIDC said in its annual report, demand for timber and timber products in 2013 is forecast to be as much as it was in 2012.

It noted, "Plywood, logs, sawntimber and veneer are still the main export commodities and made up 92 per cent of the total export volume in 2012."

The corporation further added, Sarawak's timber and timber products are still depending on the demand from traditional markets such as India as importer of logs, Japan (plywood), Thailand (sawntimber) and Taiwan (veneer).

"In addition, Middle East countries such as Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (UAE) will certainly drive demand in 2013 for timber product in Sarawak, significantly."

STIDC said despite the global challenges, there are still positive factors in favour of the industry, now whereby demand is expected to pick up steadily by early next year.