

Headline	HTD System will lead Malaysia into era of chemical-free technology in furniture		
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HTD System will lead Malaysia into era of chemical-free technology in furniture industry

KUALA LUMPUR: The high temperature drying (HTD) system for wood treatment will lead Malaysia into a new era of chemical-free technology in the furniture industry.

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Datuk Seri G. Palanivel, said the HTD technology, which eliminated the use of chemicals in processing rubberwood, would also reduce the processing time from 12 to two days.

"I urge industry players to take this opportunity to learn more about it and subsequently, participate as a user of this innovative technology," he said at the launch of a forum to introduce HTD system for wood treatment at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) here yesterday.

The text of his speech was read by Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Datuk Seri James Dawos Mamit.

About 150 participants joined the half-day forum co-organised by FRIM, Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) and Malaysian Timber Council (MTC).

Also present were Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod (Director General of FRIM); Mahpar Atan (Director of Industrial Development, MTIB); Abdullah Abdul Malek (Director of Raw Material Supply, MTC); and, Richard Lee (Technical Director of Advanced Low Pressure System Sdn Bhd).

Palanivel said rubberwood furniture accounted for approximately RM5 billion of total furniture export revenue

generated by wood-based sector in 2012.

"Currently, there are over 2,000 Malaysian furniture companies in operation.

"With HTD technology, they can save more in energy consumption and lead to a more efficient and cost-saving operation, which will directly enhance the competitiveness of the industries involve," he said.

Speaking to reporters after the forum, Abd Latif said FRIM was ready to share the HTD technology with other country.

He said FRIM has given an exclusive technology licensing to Advanced Low Pressure System to commercialise it locally and globally.

"Currently, FRIM has obtained the patent for the HTD system from the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia in October last year, and had also filed for patent in Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, China and India," he said.

Meanwhile, ALPS' Lee said the company has used the HTD technology for almost a year and could produce up to 20 tons of rubber wood per session.

"We will be investing RM10 million this year and another RM12 million next year to build facilities for the HTD system.

"At the international level, we planned to build a new plant in Thailand and it will be operational by year-end," he said.

The HTD system was developed and refined over the past 10 years by FRIM researchers, Choo Kheng Ten and Dr Sik Huei Shing. Bernama