



## **Sarawak Timber Association . Persatuan Kayu Kayan Sarawak**

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### **PRESS STATEMENT**

(For Release on 16 September 2009)

#### **STA's Views on the Report by the National Action Committee set up by**

#### **Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.**

The recent findings released by "Laporan Jawatankuasa Bertindak Peringkat Kebangsaan Bagi Menyasat Dakwaan Penderaan Seksual Terhadap Wanita Kaum Penan Di Sarawak" (the Report) concerning the alleged sexual abuse of Penan women and girls are of grave concerns to the Sarawak Timber Association (STA). STA views sexual abuse in any form not only to Penan women and girls but also to other communities as human rights violation. It is certainly one of the most deplorable sexual offences that cannot be tolerated.

Sexual offence is an individual act and a ubiquitous social problem that is prevalent in every level of society and in every part of the world. However, in this instance, STA views that the timber industry has been unfairly and unjustly blamed for the alleged offences. STA is of the view that the majority of the logging companies and the timber operators in the State are law abiding citizens and show utmost respect to the culture and way of life of the Penan and other communities. Malaysia has laws to deal with sexual offences. In the event any person is found to contravene any laws, the police is the appropriate authority to take the necessary actions.

STA firmly believes that neither the Penan nor any other communities should be sexually exploited by any group. STA calls upon the police to promptly and thoroughly conduct the investigation into the allegation of rape and sexual abuses of Penan women and girls in Baram. However, STA urges all interested parties neither to pass judgment nor to read conclusion against anyone including any of the timber companies before due diligence and process of the laws.

STA urges Penan communities to join the mainstream of the society which affords them with a balanced development and better access to the various amenities including education system. STA believes that logging companies will continue to complement the government's effort in raising the living standard of the Penan communities to improve their livelihood and bring them into the mainstream of the society.