



Media Release

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Sarawak Timber Association Annual General Meeting 2025

The Sarawak Timber Association (STA) successfully held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025 on 28 March 2025 at Wisma STA. The AGM was chaired by Dato Henry Lau, Chairman, with the support of all the Office Bearers in attendance. The event was honoured by the presence of two esteemed Advisors, whose expertise plays a crucial role in the development of Sarawak's forestry and timber industry.

The AGM commenced with Dato Henry Lau presenting a report on the workings of STA. Amongst other things, he expressed strong concern over the financial burden imposed by the Sarawak Government's Foreign Workers Transformation Approach (FWTA), which adds RM1,854 per worker. When combined with the recent increase in the minimum wage to RM1,700 and the upcoming mandatory EPF contributions for foreign workers, businesses are facing significant financial strain. While STA supports the streamlining efforts, the Association called for justification of the high fees.

Dato Henry Lau also addressed the European Commission's consultation process to list the *Anthoshorea*, *Richetia*, *Rubroshorea*, and *Shorea* genera under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). He warned that this move could severely impact Malaysia's timber trade and called for greater consideration of the economic consequences. STA will continue to work with relevant authorities to address these issues to ensure the sustainability and growth of Sarawak's timber industry.

Additionally, Dato Henry Lau called for the Right Honourable Premier, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg to provide visionary initiatives on green and renewable energy to protect and propel the principle of productive forest resources for future generations. He expressed confidence about the future of the timber industry under the leadership of the Right Honourable Premier. STA is optimistic that continued collaboration and supportive policies will ensure a resilient and sustainable future for both Sarawak's forests and the communities that depend on them.

Tuan Semilan anak Ripot, Deputy Director of Forests, attended on behalf of STA Advisor Datu Haji Hamden bin Haji Mohamad, Director of Forests. In his address, Tuan Semilan highlighted the critical importance of collaboration among all stakeholders including STA. He underscored ongoing efforts to advance sustainable forest management and stressed the need for collective action to meet global sustainability standards.

Tuan Semilan also outlined key initiatives where STA has been actively involved, including the development of Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) guidelines, capacity-building programmes, and the joint organisation of international



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conferences that promote global knowledge-sharing. He emphasised that the collaboration between the Forest Department Sarawak and STA is instrumental in driving innovation, improving forestry practices, and positioning Sarawak as a responsible and sustainable timber producer.

Following Tuan Semilan's address, another STA Advisor, Tuan Haji Zainal Abidin bin Abdullah, General Manager of the Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation, in his speech, recognised the challenges facing the timber industry. These included securing sufficient raw materials for processing and navigating shifting market dynamics. Tuan Haji Zainal stressed the importance of reducing dependency on natural forests in line with Sarawak's Green Policy. He also outlined strategic initiatives to address these challenges, such as promoting alternative raw material sources like rubberwood and bamboo, as well as establishing mills within Licensed Planted Forests (LPF) to enhance operational efficiency and reduce transportation costs. These steps are aimed at boosting the sustainability of the industry and meeting the increasing demand for responsibly sourced timber.

The meeting also featured discussions on Sarawak's continued commitment to sustainable forest management, with a focus on forest certification, forest carbon initiatives, and technological advancements. Both Advisors' insights and collaborative efforts were central to reinforcing the shared vision for Sarawak's timber industry and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

ANNIE TING
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SARAWAK TIMBER ASSOCIATION
28 March 2025



Dato Henry Lau (centre) chairing the AGM with the support of (from left) STA Office Bearers, Honorary Treasurer Mr Philip Choo, Honorary Secretary Dato' Sri Patrick Wong, and Vice Chairmen, Mr James Ho and Mr David Tiong.



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Tuan Semilan anak Ripot (top) and Tuan Haji Zainal Abidin bin Abdullah (bottom) speaking at STA AGM.