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Workshop to Identify Gaps and Opportunities in Implementing Forest Management Certification in Sarawak

This monthly news bulletin is produced by Sarawak Timber Association (STA) to disseminate information to our counterparts on training, research and other relevant areas.

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Photo: (top) Participants of the Workshop in a discussion during breakout session; (bottom) Acting Director of Forests, Encik Hamden Haji Mohammad delivering his speech

A Workshop to Identify Gaps and Opportunities in Implementing Forest Management Certification in Sarawak was jointly organised by Sarawak Timber Association (STA) and Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) from 5 to 6 February 2018 at Wisma STA, Kuching.

The Workshop was attended by 110 participants comprising officers from Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources (MUDeNR), Forest Department Sarawak (FDS), Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd (SFCBSB), Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC), Harwood Timber Sdn Bhd (HTSB), Natural Resources and Environment Board (NREB), Department of Environment (DOE)

Sarawak and STA member companies. The active involvement of participants of the Workshop contributed to the successful conduct of the 2-day Workshop which aimed to identify (i) gaps faced by long term forest timber licence holders in Sarawak to obtain forest management certification (FMC) under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) and (ii) opportunities and resources that are necessary in closing the gaps.

Tuan Hamden Haji Mohammad, the Acting Director of Forests in his speech acknowledged the tremendous challenges in achieving full FMC for

(Continue on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1)

Sarawak by 2022. He iterated that the State will assist and support the timber industry and urged other relevant agencies to work together through State Steering Committee and FMC Technical Committee (FMCTC) to achieve this target.

The main gaps identified in the Workshop are summarised as follows:

- (i) lack of trained manpower and expertise to fulfill the requirements of FMC standards,
- (ii) conflicting interpretation of native customary rights relating to lands and use of resources within the forest management unit (FMU) by different stakeholders, and
- (iii) differing requirements covering similar aspects

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in guidelines formulated by different agencies. Effective and practical measures to close the gaps within an agreed deadline were also sought.

The Workshop noted that the Certification Masterplan for Sarawak is being formulated and proposed to include consideration on the resources needed to achieve the certification agenda in accordance with the timeline set. This Workshop has provided a good platform for the timber industry, forestry and other related agencies to collaborate in achieving the State Government's aspiration towards full FMC in Sarawak by 2022.

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13th Meeting of the APEC Experts Group on Illegal logging and Associated Trade

The 13th Meeting of the APEC Experts Group on Illegal logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT 13) was held on 24 and 25 February 2018 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG). Fourteen (14) economies, namely Australia, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, PNG, Peru, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei, the United States, and Viet Nam as well as the APEC Secretariat were represented at the Meeting. There were five (5) Malaysian delegates, led by Mr Mohd Kheiruddin Bin Mohd Rani, Director, Trade Development Division, the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB). The Meeting was also attended by representatives from the INTERPOL, Forest Trends and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as invited guests.

The EGILAT newly elected Chair, Dr Putera Parthama, delivered his first speech as the Chair and encouraged all member economies to work together to support positive deliberations during EGILAT 13. Delegates made brief introductions of their members/participants.

The Meeting agreed on the EGILAT Multi Year Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 and the EGILAT Work Plan 2018 which will be submitted to the Senior Official Meeting 1 (SOM 1) on 8 and 9 March 2018 and the SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical

Cooperation-Committee of the Whole (SCE-COW) Meeting on 5 March 2018 respectively for endorsement.

During the session on the exchange of information relating to combating illegal logging and promoting trade in legal forest products, member economies, namely Japan, Indonesia, Australia, Peru and China presented their work relating to combating illegal logging and promoting the trade in legally harvested forest products.

Member economies also provided presentations on the progress of their work compiling the information for the EGILAT Timber Legality Template. It was agreed that all of the completed EGILAT Template documents will be uploaded to the APEC Collaboration System (ACS).

At the Cross-fora/organization Collaboration session, three (3) non-APEC Economy and International/Regional Organizations provided presentations on their experiences in combating illegal logging and its associated trade and how they could help complement EGILAT's work program.

The Meeting noted and appreciated the information shared by INTERPOL (Combating Illegal Logging and Associated Trade), Forest Trends (Timber

(Continue on page 3)



Did you know that.....

An increase number of women in decision-making roles has good outcomes for forest conditions. This is found through an in-depth intra-household interviews conducted by a team of researchers at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) at REDD+ project areas. Among other findings made by the team of researchers are (i) men prefer cash incentives while women lean toward non-cash benefits and (ii) increased women participation in decision-making brings about more equitable distribution of benefits.

Source: REDD+ Benefits: Men Want Cash, Women Want Development, available at <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/54754/redd-benefits-men-want-cash-women-want-development?fnl=en>

Did you also know that....

The world's current tallest timber building is the 18-floor Brock Commons Student Residence in Vancouver, Canada. A Japanese company, Sumitomo Forestry is planning to build the world's tallest wooden skyscraper by the year 2041. The 350m tower consisting of 70-floors will be home to residential apartments, offices as well as shops and contain 10% steel with the rest of the material for the braced tube structure coming from 185,000 cubic meters of timber. Sumitomo promises to rely on domestically sourced timber to help them "change towns into forests"



Source: A Giant "Plyscraper" Made of Timber Is On Its Way In Japan, available at <http://cleanmalaysia.com/2018/03/08/giant-plyscraper-made-timber-way-japan/>

(Continued from page 2)

Regulation Enforcement Exchange Asia Pacific) and the FAO (Supporting Forest Governance and National Stakeholders to Move towards Legality Compliance).

The Meeting also noted and appreciated the presentations provided by member economies on their experience and plan in cross-fora collaboration. This included the reports from the United States of America on the finalised illegal logging best practices resource guide and the outcomes of the Pathfinder Dialogue IV in Ho Chi Minh City.

For the capacity building, the Meeting took note of the information shared by Chile on their development of a concept note for a workshop to increase knowledge on successfully implemented tools for combating and preventing illegal logging activities and associated trade. The activities are planned to be held in 2019.

PNG, as the host economy, informed the meeting that the 14th Meeting of the APEC Experts Group on Illegal logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT 14) will be held in PNG in August 2018.

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State Level World Wetlands Day Celebration



Photo: Dr Haji Wan Lizozman and Mr Hamden Mohammad looked on as Datu Len Talif delivered a speech on behalf of Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan, Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak.

The World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February. However, the State level World Wetlands Day celebration was held at Telaga Air on 25 February 2018, with the theme "Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future". Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan, Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak in his speech emphasised the importance of wetlands as an ecosystem which retains carbon effectively and are home to various species of animals and plants.

He also mentioned that the State Government planned to gazette more areas as wetlands or 'Ramsar' site, national park and wildlife sanctuary. He pointed out that it is vital for all parties, especially those staying nearby the gazetted

area to understand the importance of such areas to the society and its impact once the area has been gazetted. In fact, these areas will encourage better management of the natural resources in the area by protecting it from being destroyed by irresponsible persons. His speech was read by Datu Len Talif Salleh, Assistant Minister of Urban Planning, Land Administration and Environment.

Among those who attended the celebration were Dr Haji Wan Lizozman Bin Wan Omar, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources Hamden Mohammad, Acting Director of Forests.

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Meeting with LPF Holders on Report of LPF Planting

The Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) convened a meeting with Licence for Planted Forests (LPF) holders on the *Report of LPF Planting* on 9 February 2018 at Wisma Sumber Alam, Kuching. The Meeting was chaired by Mr Jack Liam, Deputy Director of Forests, FDS.

In his opening remarks, Mr Jack informed the Meeting that the State Government has set a planting target of 40,000 hectares to be achieved by the LPF holders in 2018.

He added that the planting progress in past few years was very slow. As at December 2017, the total planted areas is 408,000 hectares only. He sought the cooperation of all LPF holders to expedite the tree planting rate to achieve their respective tree planting target.

For areas that have been planted, he hoped that the LPF holders would properly maintain it in order to obtain the desired yield and quality. On the other hand, the unplanted areas will be taken out from the LPF and gazetted as Totally Protected Areas (TPA), subject to the suitability of the areas.

He reiterated that action such as withdrawal of the license, will be taken on LPF holders who failed to comply with their Tree Planting Plan (TPP). He further informed the Meeting that FDS has decided to involve the Social Forestry Division, FDS and the Research Development & Innovation Division, FDS in the LPF holders' meetings from now onwards as these two (2)

divisions will actively assist the LPF holders in solving the land issue as well as strengthening the research and development in tree plantations, respectively.

The issues and matters discussed during the Meeting, amongst others are tree planting performance, shortage in manpower, land claim, forest plantation certification, research & development on tree plantations, Forests (Nursery) Rules, 2017 and the revision of Planted Forests Policy.

The participants of the Meeting hoped that the State Government would seriously look into all the issues and challenges faced by the LPF holders and assist them in solving them. The planting target will not be achievable if all these issues remain unresolved, especially those on land claims and shortage in manpower.