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Rhinoceros Hornbill (Buceros rhinoceros) Photo Credit: Mr Jason Teo Jia Hong

COVID-19 Monitoring Plan & Operational SOPs for Manufacturing Sector

In view of the recent spike in COVID-19 cases across Sarawak, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Industrial Terminal and Entrepreneur Development (MINTRED) Sarawak has put in place the COVID-19 Monitoring Plan to ensure strict compliance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) by the manufacturing sector. The COVID-19 Monitoring Plan will be overseen by a COVID-19 Monitoring Committee.

The functions of the COVID-19 Monitoring Committee include:

- To submit report on SOP Compliance/Noncompliance and positive cases (if any);
- To carry out surprise checks on factories, especially factories in red zone areas, factories with large number of workers and factories with living quarters;
- Divisional Disaster Management Committee to coordinate with Sarawak Civil Defence Force/ Royal Malaysia Police Sarawak to conduct surprise checks; and
- Sarawak Civil Defence Force/Royal Malaysia Police Sarawak may also invite other relevant agencies such as Labour Department, Immigration Department, District Office, District Council, etc, to jointly carry out surprise checks.

MINTRED Sarawak is also advising the manufacturing sector to implement the following operational SOPs:

- Encourage non-essential staff/non-operation staff to work from home (not more than 30% of management staff to be in the office for areas under Movement Control Order);
- Reduce the number of operation staff. The actual number will be decided by the employers based on their respective operational requirements;

鉴于近期砂拉越各地新冠肺炎确诊病例激增,砂拉越国际贸易与工业,工业码头和企业家发展部(MINTRED) 制定了新冠肺炎监控计划,以确保制造业严格遵守标准操作程序(SOPs)。新冠肺炎监控计划将由新冠肺炎监控委员会监督。

在这个前所未有的时期,本会继续与砂州政府和州林业机构密切合作,以遏制新冠肺炎疫情的蔓延。

本会敦促其会员严格遵守权威机构发布的指令,并根据运营 SOPs 进行操作。

同时,本会也鼓励其所有会员就面临的多项挑战和问题向本会提供反馈和意见,让本会能够有效地与政府接洽以获得对木材行业真正有益的援助。

- Strict compliance with physical distancing for production floor, common areas like canteens, halls, prayer rooms, buses, etc;
- Carry out regular sanitisation/disinfection exercises on factory buildings/premises, vehicles, production floors, hostels, etc; and
- Put in place temperature screening device at the entrance to the factory/premise. In the event that the temperature recorded is above normal or the employee is having symptoms of COVID-19, the company must refer the employee to the nearest hospital immediately.

During this unprecedented period, STA continues to work closely with the Sarawak Government and State forestry agencies to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. STA urges its members to strictly abide by the directive issued by the authority and operate in accordance to the operational SOPs.

At the same time, STA also encourages all its members to provide feedback and comments to the Association on the many challenges and issues faced, so that STA is able to effectively engage the Government in obtaining assistances which are truly beneficial to the timber industry.

Berikutan peningkatan kes COVID-19 baru-baru ini di seluruh Sarawak, Kementerian Perdagangan Antarabangsa dan Industri, Terminal Perindustrian dan Pembangunan Usahawan (MINTRED) Sarawak telah menubuhkan Pelan Pemantauan COVID-19 untuk memastikan pematuhan ketat terhadap prosedur operasi standard (SOPs) oleh sektor pembuatan. Pelan Pemantauan COVID-19 tersebut akan diawasi oleh Jawatankuasa Pemantauan COVID-19.

Dalam tempoh ini, STA akan terus bekerjasama dengan Kerajaan Sarawak dan agensi perhutanan Negeri dalam membendung penyebaran wabak COVID-19. STA menggesa ahli-ahlinya untuk mematuhi secara ketat arahan yang dikeluarkan oleh pihak berkuasa dan beroperasi mengikut SOPs. STA turut menggalakkan kesemua ahli-ahlinya untuk memberikan maklum balas dan komen kepada Persatuan mengenai cabaran dan isu-isu yang dihadapi supaya STA dapat berurusan dengan Kerajaan secara efektif bagi mendapatkan bantuan yang bermanfaat kepada industri perkayuan.

Meeting on Imposition of Anti-Dumping Duties on Malaysian Plywood

On 27 January 2021, officers from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Malaysia Development External Trade Corporation (MATRADE) as well as STA attended a meeting called by Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) to discuss concerns on the adverse impacts of anti-dumping duties imposed on Malaysian plywood by the South Korean Government. The meeting was chaired by Mdm Dayang Nena Abang Bruce who was recently appointed as Special Officer of STIDC Special Function Office upon her retirement from the position of Deputy General Manager of STIDC. One of her key tasks is to look after international issues affecting the timber industry of Sarawak.

Mdm Dayang Nena explained that, in 2010, Korean Trade Commission (KTC) had received complaints from Korean wood manufacturers alleging that the



Plywood production in a mill in Sarawak

imports of plywood from Malaysia were causing damage to the country's domestic industry. Consequently, KTC initiated an anti-dumping investigation against imports of Malaysian plywood, particularly from Sabah and Sarawak, which then led to anti-dumping duties ranging from 4.73% to 38.1% being imposed on Malaysian plywood by the South Korean Government. Plywood affected by anti-dumping duties is with thickness of 6mm and above, under Harmonised System (HS) Code of 441231 and 441232.

Due to this imposition, export of plywood from Sarawak to South Korea has decreased from 18.3% in 2010 to 6.7% in 2020. Mdm Dayang Nena highlighted that it is necessary to develop mitigation plans for this matter because it has disrupted the trade between Sarawak and South Korea, as well as reduced market share of Sarawak, especially when South Korea is still importing plywood from other neighbouring countries. STA members provided feedback that, among other factors, although the related products fall under the same HS Code, the component of the plywood being sold domestically may vary from those traded internationally and thus leading to differences in pricing.

As a way forward, MITI advised the meeting to file for administrative review against the imposition of anti-dumping duties on Malaysian plywood by the South Korean Government with the relevant authority, as well as to engage the South Korean Counsel for assistance on this matter. MITI and MATRADE will also be providing the required help and expertise to STIDC and STA during the administrative review process.

砂拉越木材工业发展机构(STIDC)于2021年1月27日召开线上会议并聚集马来西亚国际贸易与工业部(MITI),马来西亚对外贸易发展公司 (MATRADE) 和本会的代表以商讨韩国政府对马来西亚胶合板征收反倾销税的不利影响。作为前进的方向,MITI 向会议建议针对韩国政府对马来西亚胶合板征收反倾销税的情况向有关当局提出行政审查,并向韩国顾问就此事寻求协助。在行政审查过程中,MITI 和 MATRADE 将向 STIDC 和本会提供所需要的帮助和专业知识。

Pada 27 Januari 2021, pegawai-pegawai daripada Kementerian Perdagangan Antarabangsa dan Industri (MITI), Perbadanan Pembangunan Perdagangan Luar Malaysia (MATRADE) serta STA telah menghadiri satu mesyuarat yang diadakan oleh Perbadanan Kemajuan Perusahaan Kayu Sarawak (STIDC) untuk membincangkan kebimbangan mengenai kesan buruk duti anti-lambakan yang dikenakan ke atas papan lapis Malaysia oleh Kerajaan Korea Selatan.

Sebagai langkah kehadapan, MITI menyarankan ahli-ahli Mesyuarat untuk mengemukakan kajian semula pentadbiran terhadap duti anti-lambakan yang dikenakan ke atas papan lapis Malaysia oleh Kerajaan Korea Selatan dengan pihak berkuasa berkaitan, dan juga untuk mendapatkan bantuan daripada Peguam Korea Selatan. MITI dan MATRADE juga akan memberi bantuan dan kepakaran yang diperlukan kepada STIDC dan STA semasa proses kajian semula pentadbiran.

Increment in Receiving, Sorting and Delivery (RS&D) Charges for Timber Products

The Kuching Port Authority (KPA) is increasing the current RS&D charges for timber products from RM7.00 per tonne or part thereof (ex-shed export) to RM8.00 per tonne or part thereof, with effect from **1 April 2021**. In a meeting held in April 2017 between KPA and STA discussing port tariffs, it was agreed upon the then RS&D charges of RM5.00 per tonne or part thereof would be gradually increased over the years to the statutory rate of RM9.00 per tonne or part thereof.

The services provided under the RS&D charges include (i) unloading of timber products from exporters' vehicles; (ii) keeping timber products in the warehouse; (iii) sorting out timber products accordingly to destinations; and (iv) loading timber products onto the vessels for export.

古晋港务局 (KPA) 致函通知港口关税法定的木材产品的接收,分拣和配送 (RS&D) 收费将从2021年4月1日起,从每吨或每立方米马币7令吉增加至每吨或每立方米马币8令吉。

Lembaga Pelabuhan Kuching telah menaikkan caj semasa RS&D bagi produk kayu dari RM7.00 per tan atau sebahagian daripadanya (eksport exshed) kepada RM8.00 per tan atau sebahagian daripadanya, berkuatkuasa dari **1 April 2021**.

STA Membership Renewal Reminder

Members of the Association are reminded that STA Membership Renewal for 2021 has fallen due on 1 January 2021. However, in accordance to Article 4(d) of STA Memorandum and Articles of Association [page 28 of Thirteenth Printing, September 2014], members are given a grace period of 30 days that is, by 31 January 2021 to effect payment.

温馨提醒所有本会会员,2021年STA会员更新已于2021年1月1日截止。然而,根据本会章程条例,第4条例(2014年9月,第13版,第28页),将给予会员30天的宽限期,即至2021年1月31日前付款会员资格更新费。

Ahli-ahli Persatuan adalah diingatkan bahawa Pembaharuan Keahlian STA bagi 2021 telah tamat pada 1 Januari 2021. Walau bagaimanapun, selaras dengan Perkara 4(d) Memorandum dan Artikel Persatuan STA [halaman 28 Cetakan Ke-13, September 2014], ahli-ahli diberi tempoh selama 30 hari, iaitu sehingga 31 Januari 2021 untuk membuat bayaran



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wisma STA, Kuching

Tuesday, 10:30 am 30 March 2021

For further information, please contact STA Secretariat at telephone number 082-332 222 or email to sta@sta.org.my

Mesyuarat Agung Tahunan 2021 bagi Persatuan Kayu Kayan Sarawak akan diadakan pada Selasa, 30 Mac 2021 pada pukul 10.30 pagi di Wisma STA, Kuching.

本会2021年度会员大会将于2021年3月30日(星期二),上午10点30分假古晋STA大厦举行。

Challenges & Impacts of COVID-19

On 11 January 2021, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, announced fresh nationwide movement restrictions to curb the skyrocketing number of COVID-19 cases in the country. For Sarawak, in order to control the COVID-19 situation, the State Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) announced on 16 January 2021 that Movement Control Order (MCO) would only be enforced in Sibu, Kanowit and Selangau, while all other divisions in Sarawak to undergo Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) for two (2) weeks from 18-31 January 2021. Later on 27 January 2021, SDMC announced that this enforcement would be further extended until 14 February 2021.

During this period, the timber industry including STA members continues operation under stringent conditions, minimal workforce and implementation of precautionary measures.

Due to the negative effects of the pandemic and spiralling operational costs coupled with sluggish global timber market, the industry has been struggling to survive and sustain. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the industry was already in a dire situation facing various policy and administrative requirements such as increase in premium and cess as well as labour costs on top of existing high production costs.

The year 2020 saw production continue to drop both at the upstream and downstream sectors. This is evident in the overall contraction of timber and timber products export values provided by Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC). According to STIDC, Sarawak's timber and timber products export value dropped 18% last year to RM3.7 billion from RM4.5 billion in 2019. As for Sarawak's main timber products, the export value of plywood slumped 13% to RM2.0 billion from RM2.3 billion year-on-year, while logs fell 32% to RM493 million from RM722 million. Most of the other major timber products such as sawntimber and fibreboards also experienced a decline in export value for 2020. Sawntimber posted a dip of 25% to RM437 million from RM583 million in 2019, while fibreboards slipped 13% to RM306 million from RM351 million.

With the nation currently in the midst of fighting the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry is expecting to be confronted with even more risks and uncertainties in running its operations. Problems such as cash flow crisis due to reduced production and sales volumes, workforce constraints, transportation delay and limitation, as well as difficulty in accessing raw materials and spare parts suppliers may well pervade the industry in months to come.

Market demand for the industry may still exist, but it has become tremendously challenging for the industry to maintain its current market share as well as regaining shares that have been lost to other competing countries. Undoubtedly, the industry is an essential component in the economic development of Sarawak. In order to revitalise the industry, STA strongly believes that the relevant policies implemented by the Government should complement and have positive influence on the industry's current environment. It goes without saying that STA will remain supportive in highlighting the industry's plight to the relevant authorities, providing the information needed to move forward decision makings as well as bridging any communication barriers among the stakeholders.

砂拉越灾难管理委员会 (SDMC) 为了控制砂州新冠 肺炎情况,于2021年1月16日颁布为期两周,即从2021年1月18日至31日在诗巫、加拿逸及实兰沟执行行动管制禁令 (MCO),其他省份则执行有条件行动管制禁令 (CMCO)。随后,SDMC 再次于2021年1月27日宣布该禁令将延长至2021年2月14日。

由于疫情和运营成本上升带来的负面影响,再加上全球木材市场低迷,木材业一直在努力生存和维持。甚至在新冠肺炎疫情危机之前,木材业已经处于严峻的形势,面临着各种政策和行政要求,例如,除了现有的高生产成本外,木桐费和附加税以及劳工成本的增加。木材业上游和下游的产量在2020年继续下滑。

Untuk Sarawak, dalam mengawal situasi COVID-19, Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Bencana Negeri (SDMC) mengumumkan pada 16 Januari 2021 bahawa Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (MCO) hanya akan dilaksanakan di Sibu, Kanowit dan Selangau, sementara lain-lain bahagian di Sarawak akan menjalani Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan Bersyarat (CMCO) selama 2 minggu dari 18 hingga 31 Januari 2021. Kemudiannya pada 27 Januari 2021, SDMC mengumumkan penguatkuasaan tersebut akan dilanjutkan sehingga 14 Februari 2021.

Disebabkan oleh kesan negatif wabak dan peningkatan kos operasi, ditambah dengan pasaran kayu global yang perlahan, industri telah bergelut untuk terus beroperasi dan bertahan. Bahkan sebelum krisis wabak COVID-19, industri telahpun berada pada situasi kritikal berdepan dengan pelbagai dasar dan pentadbiran seperti peningkatan premium dan cukai, kos buruh dan kos pengeluaran tinggi yang sedia ada. Tahun 2020 menyaksikan pengeluaran terus menjunam untuk kedua-dua sektor huluan dan hiliran.

Forest Industry in Limbo After Mandatory COVID-19 Screening for Foreign Workers

In 2020, the COVID-19 crisis left the whole world gripped in unprecedented uncertainty owing to protocols and lockdowns. As in most parts of the world, Sarawak Government has imposed containment measures as well as restriction on movement and gathering to curb the spread of COVID-19. STA members have, at the onset of the outbreak, taken preventive measures, in line with the recommendations outlined by the Sarawak Disaster Management Committee (SDMC), to ensure that the virus does not spread into workers' quarters and workplaces. This effort has remained in place since then and has not been without heavy cost.

Notwithstanding that, in light of the high number of COVID-19 positive cases reported in Sarawak in recent months, companies have resorted to implementing stricter standard operating procedures (SOPs) which also involve limiting entry to and exit from workers' quarters and workplaces. On top of that, the freeze in new recruitment of foreign workers by the Federal Government since June 2020 has further allowed the companies to protect these existing foreign workers residing in their premises.

The forest industry is aware that the Federal Government has made COVID-19 screening for foreign workers mandatory in all sectors in six (6) high risk States and Federal Territories, namely Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Penang, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, beginning 1 December 2020. It was clear that foreign workers in Sarawak are not required to undergo COVID-19 screening test. Despite that, in January 2021, a number of STA members began receiving letters from Ministry of Health and Labour Department requiring swift action from companies to comply with the Government's order or risk facing ultimatums such as jail terms and penalties.

The letters left the industry with little clarity on mechanism to carry out this mass testing involving large number of workers. Stuck in a limbo, companies' further requests for assistance on the matter from the Government and various departments were of little to no avail. Moreover, at the time the letters were issued, the list of panel clinics and hospitals provided by Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) to perform COVID-19 screening did not include those from Sarawak, which further escalated the confusion of whether the directive applies to them.

Although the press statement by Minister of Human Resources, Datuk Seri M Saravanan, on 30 January 2021, did shed some light on the issue by clarifying that the scope of COVID-19 Screening Programme for Foreign Workers is extended nationwide starting 2 February 2021, the new directive did not bode well with employers for various reasons.

As reported by STA members, due to stricter SOPs, foreign workers have received little to none exposure to

outside sources. The mandatory screening will only stir the pot by exposing the workers to danger of infections and the likely outcome of this is transmission of the virus into workers' guarters and workplaces.

Furthermore, the costs of mandatory COVID-19 screening for all foreign workers is daunting, if not prohibitive, and reviving the economy has become the main concern of the industry after suffering financial distress through 2020. The mandatory COVID-19 screening is expected to add to the financial burdens of these businesses.

Therefore, the relevant authorities should look into the industry's limited resources and capacity, and provide clear, coordinated strategies in relation to COVID-19 screening for foreign workers. Lastly, better collaboration within agencies, across governments as well as between government and industry is essential to recognise, understand and support the industry as it navigates through unprecedented issues such as COVID-19.

林业企业意识到联邦政府于2020年12月1日开始向6个高风险州属和联邦直辖区,即雪兰莪,森美兰,槟城,沙巴,吉隆坡和纳闽的所有工业邻域强制实施外劳新冠肺炎检测。砂拉越外劳显然不需要接受新冠肺炎筛查检测。

尽管如此,许多本会会员于2021年1月开始陆续收到卫生部和劳工部的来信要求公司迅速采取行动以遵守政府的指令,否则将面对刑罚例如坐牢和罚款。该信件并未清楚解释大规模外劳新冠肺炎检测的程序。

Industri perhutanan mengambil maklum bahawa Kerajaan Persekutuan telah mewajibkan pemeriksaan COVID-19 untuk pekerja asing di semua sektor di 6 Negeri dan Wilayah Persekutuan yang berisiko tinggi, iaitu Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Pulau Pinang, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur dan Labuan, mulai 1 Disember 2020. Jelas bahawa pekerja asing di Sarawak tidak perlu menjalani ujian saringan COVID-19.

Walaupun bagaimanapun, pada bulan Januari 2021, sejumlah ahli-ahli STA mula menerima surat daripada Kementerian Kesihatan dan Jabatan Tenaga Kerja yang memerlukan tindakan segera syarikat untuk mematuhi perintah kerajaan atau berisiko menghadapi tindakan seperti hukuman penjara dan denda. Industri hanya memperolehi sedikit penjelasan melalui surat-surat tersebut mengenai mekanisme pelaksanaan ujian berskala besar yang melibatkan sebilangan besar pekerja.

PenjanaKerjaya 2.0

The PenjanaKerjaya Hiring Incentive and Training Programme is an economic recovery initiative under the Ministry of Human Resources and administered by the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO). The programme aims to stimulate employers' needs and assist local employees in increasing their job opportunities. The first phase of the programme, known as PenjanaKerjaya 1.0, was carried out from 15 June 2020 to 20 December 2020.

This year, to further spur local employment, the Government has launched PenjanaKerjaya 2.0, an enhanced version of the previous programme. Application for PenjanaKerjaya 2.0 starts from 1 January 2021 until 30 June 2021. Employers who have recruited new employees or apprentices from 21 December 2020 onwards may apply for PenjanaKerjaya 2.0.

The five (5) categories of full-time employment that are eligible for incentive are as follows:

Category	Aged below 40	Aged 40 and above	Vulnerable Groups	Prolonged Unemployment	Malaysianization ¹
Incentive	40% of monthly salary (maximum RM4,000)	60% of monthly salary (maximum RM6,000)			40% of monthly salary paid to employers (RM4,000); 20% of monthly salary paid to employees (minimum RM500)
Payment Duration	6 months				
Required Salary	Minimum of RM1,500 and above per month				
Service Contract Duration	Minimum 12 months				

¹ Local talents taking over positions usually filled by foreign workers, e.g. workers in plantation sector, security guards, manufacturing and construction.

Employers hiring apprentices are also eligible for a monthly incentive of RM1,000 for a duration of 3 months with the following criteria:

- School leavers / graduates aged 18 to 30 years who are unemployed and have no permanent jobs
- Minimum salary of RM1,200 per month
- Service contract duration for a minimum of 3 months

Apart from this, employers may also apply for mobility assistance of which a one-off incentive of RM500 or RM1,000 shall be given to employees based on their workplace distance. Additionally, incentive amounting to RM7,000 is available for training or upskilling employees according to their job requirements.

For more details on PenjanaKerjaya 2.0, please call SOCSO Customer Service hotline 03-8091 5300 / 1-300-22-8000 or email penjanakerjaya@perkeso.gov.my

今年,为进一步刺激本地就业,政府推出了PenjanaKerjaya 2.0,为先前计划的增强版本。PenjanaKerjaya 2.0从2021年1月1日至2021年6月30日接受申请。从2020年12月21日起聘请新雇员或学徒的雇主可以申请PenjanaKerjaya 2.0。

Tahun ini, bagi terus memacu pengambilan pekerja tempatan, Kerajaan telah melancarkan PenjanaKerjaya 2.0, versi yang dipertingkatkan daripada program sebelumnya. Permohonan untuk PenjanaKerjaya 2.0 bermula dari 1 Januari 2021 hingga 30 Jun 2021. Majikan yang telah mengambil pekerja atau perantis baru mulai 21 Disember 2020 boleh memohon PenjanaKerjaya 2.0.

