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Tajuk : Govt to boost downstream timber industry

## Govt to boost downstream timber industry

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**KUCHING:** The state government is taking various steps to boost the downstream timber industry, including furniture manufacturing, to enhance its competitiveness in the international market.

Assistant Environment Minister Datuk Len Talif Salleh said among the steps were establishing technical collaboration with industry players to conduct research and developments on acacia wood and other plantation timber for the manufacturing of high-quality furniture.

Besides establishing a position in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak for the purpose of conducting research and development of furniture design and high-value furniture manufacturing, the government plans to start up a timber trading house for a continuous and adequate supply of raw materials.

"The government will intensify marketing promotions including visits and exhibition participations in international countries, Asian countries, South-East Asian countries and the Middle East.

"Efforts will be taken to review and develop industrial training programme to support the needs of the downstream industry workers as well as increase participation of small and medium enterprise in the state's timber industry," said Len Taliff in response to Batu Lintang assemblyman See Chee How and Lambir assemblyman Ripin Lamat's supplementary questions during the state legislative assembly.



The government plans to start up a timber trading house for a continuous and adequate supply of raw materials. — filepic

The state government also aims to improve infrastructures and facilities to boost the growth of the furniture manufacturing industry as well as invite foreign investors to develop the downstream timber industry in Sarawak.

Len said the current export market emphasised legal and sustainable wood product supply.

"To maintain importance of the industry and fulfil demand of foreign buyers, the state government has improved the Sarawak timber legality verification system to ensure it will receive recognition and acceptance as well as comply with the needs of the importing countries," he said.

The government also ordered forest licencees to acquire forest man-

agement certificates as it is a critical tool to help companies meet the demand for certified timber.

Forest certification can ensure that downstream industry gets the certified source of supply.

Six main licencees are required to certify at least one area of their respective forest management units (FMU) by July under any certification scheme recognised internationally such as Forest Stewardship Council, Programme for the Endorsement Forest Certification and Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme or any scheme approved by the forestry director.

Certified FMU are subjected to audit by a third party to ensure that they comply with the practice of Sustainable Forest Management.