

NEW SARAWAK TRIBUNE Business

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Alternative materials for timber industry

KUCHING: Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) will jointly organise Seminar Kayu Getah, Acacia, Palma & Spesies Perintis Sarawak 2012 (GAPPS 2012) in Kuching, Sarawak on November 19 and 20.

The seminar, expected to be officiated by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Dato Sri Douglas Uggah Embas, on November 19, aims to promote and explore the use of alternatives to naturally-grown pioneer species as raw materials for the production of wood-based products.

Over 100 people comprising representatives from forest-relat-

ed agencies, experts, researchers, designers, furniture manufacturers and other wood-related industry players in Sarawak are expected to join the seminar to learn, share and discuss the latest findings and various related issues.

The timber-related industry is an important source of income for Malaysia over the past decades with exports amounting to some RM20 billion per annum. However, the industry will face shortages of supply of quality timber in the near future due to the increasing importance given to the conservation of environment and forests. Fortunately, there are many lesser-known species and agricultural by-products that can be used as alternative to supplement cur-

rent requirements by wood-based industries.

Various research and development (R&D) initiatives by local universities and research institutions have been successful in identifying wood-based products that can be produced from these alternative resources, which could help to reduce the industry's dependence on forest timbers as well as the rate of deforestation.

This seminar will present the results of R&D and commercialisation of rubber wood, palms, acacia and other pilot species as alternatives for the timber industry of the future. A total of 18 papers will be presented by FRIM researchers and representatives from STIDC, UNIMAS, Sarawak

Forest Department, Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Malaysian Timber Council, Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) Sarawak and Malaysian Timber Industry Board.

Findings of economic research, and various issues and challenges faced by the industry will also be discussed in detail for the benefit of all participants, particularly entrepreneurs in the timber-related industries in Sarawak.

The seminar is free of charge and open to the public. For registration or queries, please contact Puan Siti Emiza Misi (082-473000 / ct_emiza@pusaka.gov.my); Yanti Abdul Kadir (03-62797705 / yanti@frim.gov.my).