

Headline	Plan initiated to accelerate growth of timber industry		
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Plan initiated to accelerate growth of timber industry

KUCHING: The Sarawak Timber Industry Transformation and Reformation Plan has now been initiated to accelerate the growth of the industry, said Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan.

He explained that this strategic initiative augured well with the Forestry and Timber Industry Master Plan 2020-2030 and the state's Post Covid-19 Development Strategy (PCDS) 2030, to ensure resilience and to generate RM8 billion in export earnings by 2030.

"These initiatives are necessary to boost high value-added wood-based and plywood products, particularly furniture and engineered wood as well as bamboo-based products, to support the local industry through innovation, state-of-the-art technology, automation and support of the industry players.

"Towards that end, the state government is promoting planted forests to ensure sustainable supply of raw materials," he said in a press release issued by Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) on Saturday.

Awang Tengah, who is also Minister of International Trade and Investment and STIDC chairman, mentioned this when speaking to Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) delegates on an industry engagement roadshow to Sarawak on Friday.

Awang Tengah, who is also Second Minister of Natural Resources and Urban Development, said a furniture testing lab is under construction in Kota Samarahan to provide furniture-testing services to meet the global standards for both domestic and international markets.

"The government is also collaborating with the industry players to develop furniture parks in Kuching and Tanjung Manis to lure investors to



Awang Tengah (fifth left) and Muhtar (fourth right) in discussion after the exchange of memento. — Photo courtesy of STIDC

develop furniture industry for export markets.

"This would bring RM500 million worth of investment to Sarawak besides generating RM4 billion in export earnings by 2030," he added.

He also highlighted that under the Sarawak Young Designers (SayD'SignerSarawak) Programme, STIDC is collaborating with Bandung Institute of Technology, Polytechnic University of Milan and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) to train and to produce world class furniture designers.

This is aimed at supporting the timber industry and to produce furniture for global market, he pointed out.

"At the same time the government through STIDC is promoting bamboo planting. The Bamboo Industry Development Masterplan was formulated in 2019. Its emphasis is on resource management, market development, technology adoption and commercialisation, research and development, sustainable environment, capacity building, corporate social responsibility as well as policy and institutional strengthening."

According to the Deputy Premier, Sarawak aspires to have various bamboo-based industries by 2030 to produce charcoal, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, textile, pulp and paper, food, handicraft and engineered bamboo products such as bamboo ply, strand woven bamboo and glued-laminated-bamboo.

"We also aim to plant at least 20,000 hectares of bamboo for industrial purposes to generate RM200 million in export earnings by 2030 and to create 5,000 employments with household income of RM36 million per year."

In tandem with this, he said STIDC is collaborating with research institutions such as Forest Industry Research Malaysia (FRIM) and Sirim Berhad in conducting research and development on local planted timber and bamboo species.

The same collaboration will also be held with universities like Unimas, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), University of Technology Sarawak (UTS) and Swinburne University of Technology.

"The aim is to innovate production technology towards

producing high value-added wood-based and bamboo-based products to generate high income," said Awang Tengah.

Meanwhile, MTC pledged to collaborate with STIDC in promoting high value-added timber products to achieve the national export target of RM28 billion by 2030.

MTC also hopes to cooperate with the related state agencies particularly STIDC, Forest Department and Sarawak Timber Association in addressing international trade barriers in order to facilitate forest certification initiatives and timber trade in the global market.

Present at the meeting between STIDC and MTC were Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources permanent secretary Datu Zaidi Mahdi, STIDC general manager Datu Hashim Bojet and MTC chief executive officer Muhtar Suhaili.

Other attendees included Sarawak Forest Department deputy director Jack Liam, Sarawak Timber Association chief executive officer Annie Ting, MTC delegates, and management members of STIDC and Harwood Timber Sdn Bhd.