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## S`wak forest mgmt model for others to emulate

**MIRI:** Sarawak has always maintained a timber production volume of below 9.2 million cubic metres per annum as recommended by the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO).

Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan said, findings from ITTO also revealed that Sarawak's forest management can be a model for other countries to emulate.

"Recommendation for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) leading to forest certification and the establishment of the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) has further strengthened forest management in the state," he pointed out.

Speaking at the Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation's (STIDC) northern region 50th anniversary celebration on Friday night, Awang Tengah said in late 2000, STIDC embarked on forest certification particularly in natural forests in tandem with the SFM initiative by ITTO.

This was followed by certification initiatives of planted forests under the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), he explained.

Forest certification is crucial to ensure sustainable raw materials for the timber industry besides ensuring global recognition and acceptance of our end products, he said.

Established in 1973, STIDC's function is to regulate and facilitate the overall development of the timber industry.

"From a humble beginning with logging and sawmilling as its main activities, the timber industry is now involved in secondary and downstream processing activities.

"Using state-of-the-art facilities, wood residues are processed into value-added products such as medium density fibreboard, particle board, charcoal briquettes, laminated veneer and furniture," he said.

Awang Tengah said with sustainability in mind, STIDC is collaborating with strategic partners including Sarawak Forestry Department, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak to undertake research and development to produce high value-added products and to optimise utilisation of timber from planted forests.

He urged industry players to render undivided support to ensure the success of the government's initiatives and efforts to achieve economic prosperity, social inclusivity and environmental sustainability.