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Fadillah: Vast potential for bamboo industry to grow

KEPONG: The bamboo industry possesses immense potential to be developed and used as an alternative timber source, says Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

The Deputy Prime Minister said bamboo was an important natural resource, adding that Malaysia was home to about 70 bamboo species, with 45 being local species found in Malaysian forests.

"In the peninsula alone, bamboo encompasses some 229,122.57ha.

"Although its export value is not big when compared to other timber products, bamboo has the potential to be developed and used as an alternative source for various applications," he said when officiating the World Bamboo Day Malaysia 2023 at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) auditorium yesterday.

Fadillah, who is also the Plantation and Commodities Minister, said the production of highly-marketable bamboo products should be prioritised.

"This could be done through developing the latest technology and innovations. It has to include all layers, including entrepreneurs, professionals, researchers,



Big on bamboo: Fadillah (centre) visiting the booth after launching the World Bamboo Day Malaysia 2023 at FRIM auditorium in Kepong, Kuala Lumpur. Looking on is Sng (third from left). — AZMAN GHANI/The Star

policymakers and other related stakeholders," he said, adding that bamboo product exports raked in some RM14.46mil in 2022.

This marked a 66.1% increase compared to the previous year, which brought in RM8.7mil.

He added that some 577 industry players are actively involved in the industry through sectors such as furniture, construction, textiles, plantations, food, charcoal (bamboo briquettes) and handicraft.

"To effectively spur the national bamboo industry, a more effective and holistic approach must be taken to create a conducive environment.

"This allows downstream industries to produce more valuable bamboo products," he said while also urging all direct stakeholders, from upstream to downstream levels, to take proactive measures to ensure improvements in the bamboo industry.

Fadillah also noted how the ministry, through the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB), also took various measures to improve the national bamboo industry. This includes building bamboo plantations in Hulu Terengganu, which comprises 15ha of land, and the bamboo community farming programme, which was approved under the 12th Malaysia Plan.

FRIM director-general Ismail Parlan said under the 12th Malaysia Plan, FRIM had conducted research on bamboo as a resource for the production of furniture, biofuel, construction and ecotourism products.

He said that the agency also worked closely with various agen-

cies in both the private and public sectors, resulting in the success of various technology-sharing initiatives.

FRIM, Ismail said, conducted extensive bamboo research since the 1980s, encompassing various aspects such as taxonomy and planting techniques, among others. He added that research efforts focusing on bamboo plantations and produce also saw an emphasis on 13 species that possessed significant commercial value.

"The main reason for this research is to encourage the growth of the bamboo industry and to bring maximum economic benefits to the community," he said during his speech that was read out by FRIM deputy director-general (research) Norwati Muhamad.

Also present at the event were Plantation and Commodities Ministry deputy secretary-general (strategic planning) Abdul Hadi Omar, ministry undersecretary Wan Ahmad Asmady Wan Md Din, MTIB chairman Datuk Larry Sng, MTIB director-general Mohd Nor Zamri Mat Amin and Malaysia Timber Council chairman Zainal Abidin Abdullah.