



**JOINT PRESS RELEASE BY SARAWAK TIMBER ASSOCIATION (STA) AND
MALAYSIAN TIMBER CERTIFICATION COUNCIL (MTCC)**

**WORKSHOP TO IDENTIFY GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPLEMENTING
FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION IN SARAWAK**

The State Government of Sarawak has announced the commitment for all long term forest timber licences to be certified by 2022.

In response to this announcement, Sarawak Timber Association (STA) and Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) jointly organised a workshop to identify gaps and opportunities in implementing forest management certification (FMC) in Sarawak from 5 to 6 February 2018 at Wisma STA, Kuching. The conduct of this 2-day workshop is timely as it aims to identify (i) gaps faced by long term forest timber licence holders in Sarawak to obtain forest management certification under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS), and (ii) opportunities as well as resources that are necessary in closing the gaps.

The workshop was attended by a total of 110 participants comprising STA members and officers from Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources (MUDNR), Forest Department Sarawak (FDS), Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd (SFCSB), Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC), Harwood Timber Sdn Bhd (HTSB), Natural Resources and Environment Board (NREB) and Department of Environment (DOE) Sarawak.

The Acting Director of Forests, Tuan Hamden Haji Mohammad in his speech acknowledged the tremendous challenges involved for Sarawak in achieving full FMC by 2022. He iterated that the State will assist and support the timber industry and urged other relevant agencies to work together through State Steering Committee and FMC Technical Committee (FMCTC) to achieve this agenda.

The main gaps identified are summarized as (i) lack of expertise and capacity to fulfill the requirements of FMC standards, (ii) conflicting interpretation of native customary rights relating to lands and use of resources within the forest management unit (FMU) by different stakeholders, and (iii) differing requirements covering similar aspects in guidelines formulated by different agencies.

The Workshop noted that the Certification Masterplan for Sarawak is being formulated and proposed to include consideration on the resources needed to achieve the certification agenda in accordance with the timeline set. With regard to the draft Forest

Management Certification Licence Agreement (FMCLA), the Workshop hoped that the concerns raised by the timber industry would be taken into account.

This workshop has provided a good platform for the timber industry, forestry and other related agencies to collaborate in achieving the State Government's aspiration towards full FMC in Sarawak by 2022.

