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STA dan Rakan2

This monthly news bulletin is produced by Sarawak Timber Association (STA) to disseminate information to our counterparts on training, research and other relevant areas.

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The 27th Board of Directors Meeting of STA Training Sdn Bhd

The adjourned 27th Board of Directors' Meeting of STA Training Sdn Bhd (STAT) was held on 22 August 2011 at Wisma STA, Kuching. Pursuant to the resolution passed by the Company at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 30 March 2011, the Board noted that the approved amendments to the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&A) shall take effect on 3 June 2011.

Amongst other agendas, the Board was also informed on the progress of training - for the months of January to June 2011, trainers of the Company assessed a total of 169 operators in the various skills

sets, and 126 operators completed the first phase of training under the Training Seminar Concept. In view of the impending implementation of the Forests (Trained Workmen) Rules, the Board advised the Secretariat to conduct an additional Assessor Course for the Member Companies to ensure that there are sufficient qualified assessors in the industry to carry out the assessment when the Forests (Trained Workmen) Rules come into force. The Board was also informed of the progress made in the recruitment of students for the third cohort of the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science (Sustainable Tropical Forest Management).

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STA Mutual Sdn Bhd News Update

The 25th Board of Directors' Meeting of STA Mutual Sdn Bhd (STAM) was held on 16 August 2011 at Wisma STA, Kuching. The Board acknowledged the approved amendments to the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&A) that took effect on 3 June 2011, and unanimously decided to establish the Board of Honorary Advisers (BHA) in accordance with Article 93A of the M&A. The functions of the BHA are to:

(i) guide and assist the Company according to its objectives as stated in the M&A, and

(ii) deliberate on any issues or matters that have been referred by the STA Council to the BHA to advise on either decisions to be made or the policy to be followed by the Company from time to time.

The Board also approved the award of two (2) new STA Scholarship; (i) to Ms Beth Anastashia Anak Albert to pursue her Bachelor of Forestry Science degree course for three years and (ii) to Ms Regina Mariah Kalong to pursue her Bachelor of Wood Science Technology degree course for four years. Both students are currently in

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Focus Group Meeting on Minimum Retirement Age and Labour Law

The Department of Labour Sarawak organised a Focus Group meeting to consult and discuss (i) the proposed implementation of Minimum Retirement Age for workers in the private sector and (ii) the amendments to the Labour Ordinance (Sarawak Cap. 76) at Wisma Bapa Malaysia Kuching on 15 August 2011. About sixty (60) representatives from various organisations including Government agencies, employers' associations, trade unions, professional bodies and others attended the meeting. The Meeting was chaired by the Secretary General, Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR), Dato' Seri Zainal Rahim Bin Seman.

Minimum Retirement Age for Workers in the Private Sector

Dato' Seri Zainal Rahim Bin Seman informed the participants at the meeting that the Government is proposing the retirement age for private sector to be codified at either 58 or 60. Currently, there is no law prescribing the retirement age in the private sector but most employers set their retirement age at the age of 55 years to coincide with the age for withdrawal of EPF. The main reason for the proposal is that the average life expectancy of Malaysians has now increased to 75 years and if people stopped working at the age 55 years, based on their studies and using a salary of RM720 as a base, the EPF savings would not be adequate to sustain the people till the age of 75 years. By increasing the retirement age, it will also reduce the cost the Government has to provide for health and welfare assistance to the elderly.

The proposed Retirement Age Bill does not apply to, among others, probationers, apprentices, seafarers, work which involves dangerous weapons, maids, person employed in any specific project for a specified period (short period) and foreign workers.

Sarawak Labour Ordinance (Sarawak Cap 76)

The reasons given for the labour law review are

(i) to strengthen employment governance, to be in line with the current and future business environment for the economic growth of Malaysia, (ii) to move towards self regulation and (iii) to introduce new provisions and rules in tandem with current policies, directions and aspirations of the Government. The Meeting highlighted the proposed amendments to the Labour Ordinance (Sarawak Cap 76) which are summarised as follows:-

- 1) The twenty-eight weeks of pregnancy.... in the interpretation section of the Sarawak Labour Ordinance - "confinement" means parturition resulting after at least twenty-eight weeks of" is to be reduced to ".... at least twenty-two weeks of pregnancy"
- 2) Overtime payment can be paid not later than the last day of the next wage period.
- 3) Wages earned by an employee shall be paid into an account in the name of the employee.
- 4) Wages of a domestic servant shall be paid into the account in the name of the domestic servant at a Malaysian Bank.
- 5) Any contractor for labour who fails to register with the Director of Labour is liable to a fine.
- 6) The mandatory holiday is now increased by one day.
- 7) Additional provisions for dealing with sexual harassment.
- 8) To allow for advances to be given by the employer based on the current situation and the needs of the employee



Did you know that.....

A law to combat the trade in illegally felled wood has come into force in Germany. The law deals with national controls of imports of wood from countries that have signed a partnership agreement with the European Union to prevent illegal fellings, i.e. Ghana, Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Indonesia and Liberia. The law gives the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food the powers to intervene in cases of violations in cooperation with the Customs authorities.

Source: MTIB News Extracts 30/07/11

Did you also know that....

The prices for Asian logs and timber have been rising since 2010 but the rate of change has slowed. Importers in Europe are still cautious and their inventories are low. In Japan, stocks of tropical logs are low. Japanese imports of timber and plywood from Australia, North America and New Zealand have risen, as well as plywood imports from China. Indonesian and Malaysian plywood has to compete with with the Chinese plywood.

Source: TTJ Timber Trades Journal, 06 Aug 2011



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 their second semester of first year degree courses at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Serdang, Selangor.

To date, the Company has awarded 14 scholarships since 2005 to five students pursuing the Bachelor of Forestry Science and two students pursuing the Bachelor of Wood Science Technology at UPM, six students pursuing Bachelor of Science in Science and Management of Plant Resources at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan and one student

pursuing the Diploma of Electronic Engineering at Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak.

Financial contributions to a few non-profitable organisations were also approved in the Board of Directors' Meeting. For the past few years, STAM had also provided financial assistance to other educational institutions and Community Development Projects such as the Community Reforestation Project, Arabica Coffee Plantation and construction of gravity-feed water dam in the Sela'an-Linau FMU.

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Scholarships For 3rd Cohort for Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science



Photo (left) : First cohort's graduation in New Zealand



Photo: (top) Field trip to one of the mills in Bintulu and (left) classroom session



The Sarawak Timber Association is inviting applications from Sarawakians for a full scholarship to study in the third cohort of the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science (Sustainable Tropical Forest Management). The degree covers a broad range of areas important to managing forests sustainably. The degree is offered on a part time basis over 3 years, with students required to attend 6 one-week teaching

blocks each year. The degree is fully conducted by Lincoln University of New Zealand in Kuching, Sarawak.

Applicants should have a degree from a recognised university. Persons with significant experience in the forestry or timber industries who do not

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have a degree are also eligible to apply. A good command of both spoken and written English is required. Email or fax an application letter, a curriculum vitae, and certified copies of academic transcripts (where applicable) and either a birth certificate or a passport to sta@sta.org.my or 082 444 888. For more information, please contact STA at 082-332 222 or visit www.sta.org.my.

Invitation to Participate in Sarawak Timber Selling Missions and Exhibitions

The Sarawak Timber Association (STA) had been informed by the Sarawak Timber Industry Development (STIDC) of the following activities:

- (i) Index Furniture Tradefairs, Mumbai India (29 September – 2 October 2011)
- (iii) Sarawak Timber Selling Mission to Guangzhou and Shanghai of China and Seoul of Korea (21 – 29 October 2011)

The objectives of the above Missions/Exhibitions are to provide participants with the opportunity to strengthen and establish bilateral trade with existing and potential buyers and end-users as well as to promote and increase sales of other species and products in the Indian, Chinese and Korean market. The Missions will include seminars, individual business meetings and factory visits.

These delegation will be led by Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah Ali Hassan, Second Minister of Planning and Resource Management Sarawak cum Chairman of STIDC Board.

A registration fee of RM500/pax/Mission is required by STIDC and another RM500/pax/Mission is required by the appointed travel agency to participate in the selling missions.