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**ITTO**  
INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**6 March 2024**

KUCHING: Sarawak Timber Association (STA) is proud to host the International Conference on Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests, coinciding with the coming celebration of the International Day of Forests.

This conference is organised in collaboration with Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) and WWF-Malaysia and supported by International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). It serves as a platform for international and national experts, practitioners, policymakers and stakeholders to explore the crucial interconnection between forestry and sustainable development towards establishing a comprehensive strategy that is key to conserving the long term vitality of tropical forests. The two-day event (6-7 March) at Hilton Kuching has received overwhelming response from approximately 200 participants representing multi-level stakeholders, thus indicating their interests in sustainable forest management (SFM) and conserving the tropical forests.

Forests are complex ecosystems with intricate interdependencies. Forest resource utilisation and effective sustainable management require collective efforts from all. Therefore, the conference aims to advocate for the continuous conservation of existing forests and revitalise the valued Permanent Forest Estates (PFEs) by shifting the paradigm on SFM to create more values of our tropical forests.

It also aims to advance SFM as a crucial strategy for environmental conservation, offering a multifaceted approach that promotes the responsible harvesting of timber, nurtures ecological health and fosters social well-being; and explore financing support or investment as part of a holistic strategy towards implementing SFM that have positive environmental, social and economic impacts.

By addressing these critical aspects, the conference aims to strengthen the partnerships to harness the potential of responsible forest management in the fight against climate change.

Esteemed leaders from the timber industry, government body and conservation organisation, STA Chairman Dato Henry Lau, FDS Director Datu Haji Hamden Bin Haji Mohammad, and WWF-Malaysia Chairman Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar, will speak at the conference, setting the scene on collective action for sustainable forests. Their speeches will underscore the paramount

importance of tropical forests in conserving biodiversity, generating economic benefits, and fostering positive social aspects through responsible and sustainable forest management. Recognising the multifaceted contributions of tropical forests, their insights will illuminate how collaborative efforts can shape policies and initiatives to simultaneously advance environmental sustainability, economic well-being and social welfare.

ITTO Executive Director Ms Sheam Satkuru is set to deliver a keynote address titled “Sustainable Tropical Forestry Supply Chains and Investment – A Pathway for A Sustainable Future”. In her address, she will shed light on the significant global shifts in tropical wood production, consumption and trade, and their implications on SFM. She will also delve into the potential of sustainable tropical forestry in enhancing livelihoods, conserving forests and providing multiple benefits, drawing on examples and various initiatives.

The organizers will also take the opportunity to launch the Handbooks of Reduced Impact Logging Guideline, a joint project between FDS and STA; and High Conservation Value Training Modules, which is a joint publication by WWF-Malaysia, STA, FDS and Sarawak Forestry Corporation.

The conference has four sessions to deliberate on Valuing our Forest - Future Directions and Policies; Climate-smart SFM - What Are The Options?; Finance, Market and Branding - Building Opportunities; and Collaboration and Partnership - Research, Risk and Safeguards. Moderators and speakers who are leaders in their fields of academia and industry will be deliberating on these four topics.

Ends.

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