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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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15th Meeting of the Working Group on a Pan ASEAN Timber Certification Initiative



Photo (left): Meeting in progress and (below) Group photo of all participants



The 15th Meeting of the Working Group on a Pan ASEAN Timber Certification Initiative (15th WG-PATCI) was held from 2 to 3 June 2016 in the Thai Elephant Conservation Center, Lampang Province, Thailand. The Meeting was attended by delegates from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam as well as a representative from the ASEAN Secretariat. Representatives from the European Union Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade (EU-FLEGT) Facility, Food and Agriculture Organisation Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade (FAO-FLEGT) Programme and Responsible Asia Forestry and Trade - The Nature Conservancy (RAFT-TNC) were also present at the Meeting.

Director of International Forestry Cooperation Office in the opening remarks on behalf of Director General of Royal Forest Department, Thailand warmly welcomed all delegates to the 15th AWG-PATCI Meeting in Lampang Province. He gave an introduction on the background of the Thailand Elephant Conservation Center which was established in 1993 and subsequently informed the delegates that the 15th WG-PATCI Meeting will discuss amongst others, the finalisation of stock taking study on existing initiatives for ensuring legal and sustainable timber, the current policy regional development and Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) Work plan (2016-2025).

Mr Sapol Boonsermsuk,

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Ms Siti Syaliza Mustapha, Senior Manager (Forest Management) of Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) delivered her welcoming remarks on behalf of Malaysia as the lead country for this initiative. She highlighted the achievements of this working group since its establishment in 2002 that includes (i) ASEAN Guidelines on Phased Approach to Forest Certification, (ii) ASEAN Criteria and Indicators for Legality of Timber, and the (iii) ASEAN Guidelines on Chain of Custody for Legal Timber and Sustainable Timber. She thanked all ASEAN Member States (AMS) for the support and cooperation during her leadership over the years.

The Meeting was chaired by Mr Sapol and assisted by Dr Bui Chinh Nghia, Deputy Director of Forest Production Management Department, Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFIRST), Viet Nam. Mr Dian Sukmajaya, Senior Officer of the ASEAN Secretariat updated the delegates on the outcomes of the 18th Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) and related ASEAN Meetings, the establishment of ASEAN Community 2015 where the ASEAN Leaders reaffirmed strong commitment to continue the process of deepening economic integration over the next 10 years under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, as well as the Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (SP-FAF), 2016-2025.

Each AMS updated the Meeting on their country progress reports on the Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for legality of timber (or) forest management certification, implementation of timber certification and legality assurance systems as well as ASEAN Chain-of-Custody Guidelines. The AMS shared their progress and experiences on country's preparation for the implementation of timber legality assurance system and initiatives towards establishment of forest certification in the respective countries. The Lao PDR, Malaysia and Thailand also exchanged information and experiences in the preparation for negotiation with the EU on a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA).

During the Meeting, the AMS were also informed on the development of Work Plan for Forest

Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) in ASEAN (2016-2025) which was developed based on the proposed Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation in Forestry (2016-2025) and the current Work Plan for FLEG in ASEAN (2008-2015), as well as ASOF decision to subsume the AWG-PATCI and ASEAN Expert Group for Herbal and Medicinal Plants into ASEAN Expert Group for Forest Product Development to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of the working groups under ASOF.

AMS noted the presentation by RAFT-TNC where it highlighted the thematic scope of RAFT for period 2015-2018 which includes sustainable forest and plantation management, transparent and legal trade as well as technical and advisory support provided by RAFT-TNC to create harmonisation of standards related to forestry and wood/paper products trade; sharing models and best practices in responsible forestry and trade from across ASEAN; capacity building support and outreach to major markets to strengthen incentives for responsible forestry and trade in the ASEAN region.

The Meeting also took note of the presentation by the EU-FLEGT Facility on it's activities in supporting FLEG Workplan (2016-2025) in the area of facilitation of legal and sustainable forest products, enhancement of ASEAN joint approaches in addressing FLEG issues, promotion and implementation of training programme on FLEG as well as small and medium sized enterprises.

The representative from FAO-FLEGT Programme Asia Pacific presented a concept note on "*Improved Compatibility and Synergies between Forestry Standards and Conformance Infrastructure in the ASEAN Region*" which highlighted the possible activities to support synergies and compatibility between standards and conformity infrastructure development used under FLEGT VPAs and voluntary certification schemes.

The Meeting was informed that the 16th Meeting of the Working Group on Pan ASEAN Timber Certification Initiative will be held in 2017 in Viet Nam. After the Meeting, the delegates visited the teak plantation at Tung Kwian Plantation near the Thai Elephant Conservation Center.



Did you know that.....

Japan is the latest country to achieve PEFC endorsement of its national certification system, the Sustainable Green Ecosystem Council (SGEC). The international recognition that endorsement brings, alongside the preparations for the upcoming Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, are important drivers in encouraging companies, supplier and customers to reward the sustainable management practices of the country's many family forest owners.

Source: pefc.org/news
7 June 2016

Did you also know that....

The Sarawak state government is taking steps to boost competitiveness of its downstream timber industries in international markets. Among the steps being taken include establishing technical collaboration between industry players in support of research and development on Acacia other plantation timbers for the manufacturing of high quality furniture. So far the government has created a position at the University Malaysia Sarawak to conduct research and development on furniture design and high value furniture manufacturing. In addition there are plans to set up a trading house for the continuous supply of suitable raw materials.



Source: ITTO TTM Report: 20:11, 1 – 15 June 2016

Imported Malaria Cases Among Malaysian Workers Returning from Malaria Endemic Countries

The Labour Policy Division of the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia has written to inform Sarawak Timber Association (STA) that Malaysia has recorded 196 cases of imported malaria among Malaysian workers returning home from malaria endemic countries for year 2015. The infected workers were working with Malaysian registered private companies in timber, construction and plantation sectors.

their workers received treatment before they depart to work in malaria endemic countries as well as when they return home to Malaysia.

Please visit STA's website at www.sta.org.my for the list of the malaria endemic countries and the Management Guidelines of Malaria in Malaysia issued by the Ministry of Health Malaysia.

Thus, Malaysian companies are urged to ensure

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MTCC 17th Annual General Meeting

The Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) held its 17th Annual General Meeting on 28 June 2016 at its Board Room in Kuala Lumpur. The Meeting was presided over by Datuk Himmat Singh, MTCC's newly appointed Chairman.

Mr Yong Teck Koon, the Chief Executive Officer of MTCC, presented the Annual Report to the Meeting highlighting some activities that the MTCC organised/ took part during the year of 2015. The Meeting noted that the export of timber products certified under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) recorded a total volume of 198,992 m³ in 2015, an increase of 18% in volume as compared the correspondence period of 2014.

The Meeting started off by putting on record its appreciation and gratitude to the immediate past Chairman who is also the founder of MTCC, Dato' Freezaliah Che Yeom for his dedicated long services and great contribution in guiding the growth and development of MTCC for 17 years since its inception in May 1999. The Meeting noted that MTCC will host a farewell dinner for Dato' Freezaliah Che Yeom on 27 July 2016 in conjunction with its next Board of Trustees Meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The Meeting accepted the Financial Reports of MTCC for the financial year ended 31 December 2015 together with the Reports of the Trustees and Auditor presented by the Chairman.

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Malaysian Timber Association Annual General Meeting 2016

The Malaysian Timber Association (MTA) held its 24th Annual General Meeting on 27 June 2016 at Menara PGRM Kuala Lumpur. It was attended by all nine (9) members of the Association together with one (1) Advisor and respective Secretariat staff.

The Meeting also received a report on the workings of the Association for 2015 as well as the Honorary Treasurer Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2015.

The Meeting welcomed back the Malaysian Wood Moulding & Joinery Council (MWMJC) as an Ordinary member of the Association effective 2016.



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26th Illegal Logging Update and Stakeholder Consultation Meeting

The 26th Illegal Logging Update and Stakeholder Consultation Meeting was held from 16 – 17 June 2016 at the Crystal, Royal Victoria Docks, London. The Meeting addressed a range of issues focused on the discussions towards the trading of legal timber, including the interactions between Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), sustainable development and climate change. It was attended by about 200 participants from civil society, industry and governments globally.

A delegation of seven (7) persons from Sarawak, led by Datu Sudarsono Osman, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Resource Planning and Environment (MRPE) attended the Meeting.

The 2-day event is part of a series of illegal logging update meetings organised by the Chatham House with the support from the UK Department for International Development, the EU FLEGT Facility, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Ford Foundation, part of the Climate and Land Use Alliance.

There were eight (8) sessions covering the

updates on Legislative developments to reduce illegal timber imports in Asia with presentations on Japan and China; Enforcement action against the illegal timber trade; Improving transparency and tackling corruption in the forest sector; Improving the legality of agricultural supply chains; Progress with the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs); The VPA process in Lao PDR; Ensuring respect for indigenous peoples' rights: experiences from Honduras; and Next steps for FLEGT with a panel discussion on the outcomes of the Independent Evaluation of the EU FLEGT Action Plan as well as the implications of the post-2015 development agenda.