

# STA REVIEW

Monthly Magazine of Sarawak Timber Association

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## STA REVIEW

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## Dialogue Session with Deputy Minister in Premier of Sarawak's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring) on Proposed Amendments to Sarawak Labour Ordinance

STA, led by its Honorary Secretary Mr Wong Ting Chung, initiated a dialogue session with Datuk Gerawat Gala, Deputy Minister in Premier of Sarawak's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring) at Bangunan Baitul Makmur on 1 August 2023.

The main objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the proposed amendments to the Sarawak Labour Ordinance (SLO). In attendance were officers from the Immigration and Labour Management Unit (ILMU) of the Premier of Sarawak's Department, as well as representatives from the Labour Department Sarawak (LDS) and Sarawak Immigration Department.

The Deputy Minister revealed that these amendments would be presented to the Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR) after resolving certain provisions, which is expected to be finalised in August 2023. Among the crucial insights shared by the Deputy Minister were the proposed amendments closely aligned with recent amendments made to the Employment Act 1955.

Key changes encompassed the reduction of weekly working hours from 48 hours to 45 hours per week, introduction of flexible work arrangements, extension of maternity leave from 60 to 98 days and the introduction of a paid 7-day paternity leave.

Furthermore, the Deputy Minister announced the incorporation of a new chapter within the SLO to seamlessly integrate provisions from the Employees' Minimum Standards of Housing, Accommodations, and Amenities Act 1990.

STA expressed concerns about the process of obtaining the Certificate for Accommodation from the LDS. The Deputy Minister agreed to have further engagement before implementing this new provision.



Datuk Gerawat Gala, Deputy Minister in Premier of Sarawak's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring) and Mr Wong Ting Chung, STA Honorary Secretary (seated, right) posed for photo with officers and STA Secretariat.

The Deputy Minister also mentioned about the development of an integrated online system, envisaged to be fully operational by year-end. This system promises to streamline labour-related applications and payment processes, introducing a much-needed efficiency through a paperless online interface.

STA took the opportunity to put forward an appeal to the Deputy Minister requesting an extension of the work permit duration for foreign workers in the manufacturing sector, from the current maximum of 5+1 years to a more accommodating 10 years. Retaining the workers will assist timber industry to consistently maintain the quality of timber products as these workers had already acquired the necessary skills.

The dialogue session provided the industry with greater clarity on the forthcoming changes and the timeline for implementing the amended law. With this information, stakeholders can now proactively strategise for the evolving labor landscape, making well-informed choices and adjustments to ensure compliance within the new legal framework of Sarawak.

本会在荣誉秘书黄祯俊先生的带领下，与砂总理署副部长(劳工、移民及项目监督)拿督格拉瓦加拉展开对话，以全面了解砂拉越劳工法令(SLO)的拟议修正案。此次对话会成为了有意义的双向交流平台，让业界更清楚地了解这些改变。同时还让本会能够有效地表达本会对这些修正案的担忧和疑问。

STA, diketuai oleh Setiausaha Kehormatannya Encik Wong Ting Chung mengadakan sesi dialog dengan Datuk Gerawat Gala, Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier Sarawak (Buruh, Imigresen dan Pemantauan Projek) untuk mengetahui lebih lanjut tentang cadangan pindaan ke atas Ordinan Buruh Sarawak (SLO). Sesi dialog berfungsi sebagai platform pertukaran maklumat dua hala dan membantu industri memahami lebih lanjut tentang perubahan yang dibuat. Lanya turut membolehkan STA menyuarakan kebimbangan dan pertanyaan mengenai pindaan ini dengan lebih berkesan.

## Remote Pilot Certificate of Competency (RCoC-B) Training

STA, in-collaboration with Chemsain HRD Sdn Bhd organised a Remote Pilot Certificate of Competency (RCoC-B) Training Course for 12 drone pilots from STA members from 21 to 25 August 2023 at Chemsain Building, Kuching.

The objective of RCoC-B Training was to provide the participants with an understanding on the regulations related to drone, operating requirements and safe drone flying procedures. Under the Malaysia Civil Aviation Regulations 2016 (Regulation 140-144), the

drone pilots must obtain RCoC-B before conducting visual line of sight operations within the specific category.

During her opening remarks, Ms Annie Ting, Chief Executive Officer of STA, highlighted the benefits of

using drones in the timber industry, particularly for the forest licensees engaged in forest management certification and industrial tree plantation. Drones enable the collection of data from previously inaccessible areas, at various angles, and diverse terrains in a



Mr Larry Ong, Senior Training Manager of Chemsain (front row, 6<sup>th</sup> from left) joined Ms Annie Ting, CEO of STA (front and centre) and other participants and attendees for a photo call.



short time span. This data plays a crucial role in informed decision-making and risk assessment.

In addition to that, the ultra-portable and lightweight features of drone allows it to operate in remote area, capturing high-resolution images and videos over large areas for forestry and plantation management including mapping and surveying, pest and disease monitoring, forest fires prevention and surveillance

against illegal logging and other criminal activities.

Throughout the training, participants learnt about the principles of flight of an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), its regulations in Malaysia, standard operating procedures from pre-flight to post flight, direction sensing and navigation, airmanship and aviation safety, human performance limitations and UAS equipment maintenance & component handling.

Participants were also given hands-on experience through outdoor drone practise at SMK Semerah Padi, Kuching.

Participants received the RCoC-B certificate upon passing the theoretical examination and practical assessment as per Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia standards.

本会联合Chemsain HRD有限公司于2023年8月21日至25日为本会会员的12名无人机操作员举办远程操作员资格证书(RCoC-B)培训课程,以帮助远程操作员了解无人机相关法规、操作要求和无人机安全飞行程序。该培训课程主要是为了符合无人机操作员在进行特定组别的视线操作之前必须先获得RCoC-B的需求。

STA dengan kerjasama Chemsain HRD Sdn Bhd telah menganjurkan Kursus Latihan Sijil Kompetensi Juruterbang Kawalan Jauh (RCoC-B) untuk 12 juruterbang drone daripada ahli-ahli STA dari 21 hingga 25 Ogos 2023. Peserta memperoleh pengetahuan tentang peraturan berkaitan drone, keperluan operasi dan prosedur penerbangan drone yang selamat. Ini merupakan satu keperluan untuk juruterbang drone mendapatkan RCoC-B sebelum menjalankan operasi penglihatan visual dalam kategori tertentu.

## HCV – HCSA Assessor Training Course and HCV Screening Workshop for PFE in Sarawak

WWF-Malaysia Sarawak, Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) and STA jointly organised two (2) distinct events, namely High Conservation Value - High Carbon Stock Approach (HCV-HCSA) Assessor Training Course held on 14-17 August 2023, followed by HCV Screening Workshop for Permanent Forest Estate (PFE) in Sarawak which took place from 21 to 25 August 2023.

These sessions were conducted at Merdeka Palace Hotel in Kuching, with a total of 27 participants from the three (3) organisations and Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority.

The sessions aimed to support continuous growth of expertise among HCV practitioners in Sarawak, thereby enhancing their proficiency in conducting HCV

assessments within the context of forest management certification schemes.

Through a combination of training sessions and interactive workshops, participants gained a profound understanding of the latest guidelines for integrated HCV-HCSA assessments and developed practical skills to carry out effective HCV screening, contributing invaluable support to the forest management units' HCV assessments.

Ms Annie Ting, Chief Executive Officer of STA in her speech thanked WWF-Malaysia Sarawak for inviting STA to jointly collaborate in organising the training course and workshop for officers from the Government agencies, timber industry and non-governmental organisations.

She encouraged participants to actively engage in the training and learn about HCV approaches and their implementation with the goal to strike a balance between protection and practicality. She also hoped all key stakeholders are able to acquire the same level of understanding on the HCV assessment, procedure and good practice needed to competently lead an integrated HCV and HCSA assessment.

Throughout the course of the training, participants were introduced to HCV and HCSA, HCV screening and HCV-HCSA assessments. Participants also delved into key concepts of assessments and understood the significance and critical nature of assessments as well as strategies for factoring in broader landscape considerations. The training also touched upon social prerequisites and introduced participants to the concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in the context of HCV-HCSA assessments.

Through hands-on experiences, participants gained proficiency in conducting comprehensive



(Left to right) Ms Annie Ting, CEO of STA gave her opening speech; Participants during the hands-on sessions.



assessments spanning the environmental and social dimensions of HCVs and HCS forests. Additionally, participants were equipped with data analysis techniques pivotal for drawing accurate conclusions and effectively reporting findings.

During these hands-on sessions, participants actively engaged in tasks such as identifying and establishing thresholds and cut-offs for HCV 1-6, documenting indicators along with their corresponding thresholds and mastering the utilisation of data for estimating probability levels across varying landscapes.

The sessions also provided participants with opportunity to review preliminary maps for HCV 1-6. Prior to the in-person HCV Screening Workshop, a series of three (3) online sessions were held on 24 July 2023, 31 July 2023, and 4 August 2023.

The field work and assignment for both the Training and Workshop were conducted at Kampung Pueh, Lundu.

WWF-Malaysia Sarawak, Jabatan Hutan Sarawak dan STA bersama-sama menganjurkan Kursus Latihan Penilai untuk Nilai Pemuliharaan Tinggi - Pendekatan Stok Karbon Tinggi (HCV-HCSA) pada 14-17 Ogos 2023 dan Bengkel Saringan HCV untuk Estet Hutan Kekal (PFE) di Sarawak pada 21-25 Ogos 2023. Kursus ini bertujuan untuk menyokong pembinaan kapasiti secara berterusan dalam kalangan pengamal HCV di Sarawak bagi meningkatkan kecekapan mereka dalam menjalankan aktiviti penilaian HCV dalam konteks skim pensijilan pengurusan hutan.

世界自然基金会马来西亚砂拉越分会联合砂拉越森林局及本会分别于2023年8月14日至17日举办高保护价值-高碳储量法(HCV-HCSA)评估员培训课程,及2023年8月21日至25日举办砂拉越永久林区(PFE)HCV筛选工作坊,以支持砂拉越HCV从业者的持续能力建设,并提高他们在森林管理认证计划的框架下进行HCV评估活动的熟练程度。

# Golden Jubilee Dinner & Golden Jubilee Awards 2023

Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, tracing its establishment back to 1973. With the theme “Catalysing the Vibrant and Sustainable Timber Industry”, STIDC commemorated its golden jubilee with a dinner celebration on 14 August 2023 at Borneo Convention Centre Kuching.

Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah Ali Hasan, Sarawak Deputy Premier, Minister for International Trade, Industry & Investment, and Minister of Natural Resources & Urban Development Sarawak II cum Chairman of STIDC addressed the event's attendees. His speech emphasised the pressing need for holders of Licence for Planted Forests to accelerate the industrial tree planting initiatives.

These endeavours are vital for securing a continuous supply of raw materials to sustain Sarawak's timber industry. The planting of these trees aligns with the production of high value-added products such as engineered wood, furniture, wood panels and biomass-based products.

Notably, this approach synergises with the Sarawak Government's aspiration to achieve a targeted annual export earnings of RM8 billion by 2030, as outlined in the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy 2030. He also accentuated STIDC's commitment to fostering collaborative research and development initiatives involving industry stakeholders, research

institutions and government agencies. This concerted effort aims to enhance the industry's competitiveness in the global market.

The guest of honour, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Opening, Premier of Sarawak acknowledged the pivotal role of the timber industry in Sarawak's economic trajectory.

He lauded STIDC for its unwavering dedication to nurturing the industry's growth over decades, with particular emphasis on downstream activities.

Recognising the evolving global landscape, which places greater emphasis on environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives, he encouraged STIDC to pivot its direction slightly to reflect the world's heightened focus on environmental sustainability.

He called for a cohesive, structured approach to managing the timber industry, bringing together relevant agencies like STIDC, the Land and Survey Department as well as the Forest Department Sarawak. This collective effort is geared towards realising the shared goal of a sustainable timber industry by 2030.

The jubilee celebration saw the launch of two (2) significant coffee-table books.

The first, titled “Golden Journey of Excellence”, documented STIDC's accomplishments in the timber sector over the past five (5) decades.



## Heartiest Congratulations

TO STIDC ON REACHING THIS INCREDIBLE 50-YEAR MILESTONE AND TO STA MEMBERS FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN RESPECTIVE CATEGORIES

### Winners of STIDC Golden Jubilee Award 2023

The award ceremony was presided over by the Premier of Sarawak, who bestowed each winner with a trophy and RM10,000 in recognition for their exceptional performance in respective categories. Notable winners are:

#### Solid Hartabina Sdn Bhd, for STIDC High Performance Timber Contractor (Natural Forest)

This award applauds STIDC's long-term Timber License contractors for their exceptional performance and efforts to implementing sustainable forest management practices.

Solid Hartabina Sdn Bhd is the first STIDC Timber License contractor to obtain forest management certification and the fifth forest management unit certified entity in Sarawak.

(Photos from left to right) Mr Wong Ting Chung, Senior Manager of Solid Hartabina Sdn Bhd, Datuk Ling Lu Kiong, Executive Vice Chairman of Shin Yang Plywood Sdn Bhd and Mr Lawrence Chia Kee Loong, Chief Executive Officer of Samling Group of Companies received their trophies from Sarawak Premier. (Photos courtesy of STIDC)

#### Shin Yang Group of Companies for Excellent Wood Panel Producer

This award lauds Shin Yang's instrumental role in advancing the plywood industry in Sarawak. Shin Yang's annual production capacity represents about 55% of Sarawak's total plywood production, establishing Sarawak as the region's largest producer and exporter of tropical plywood.

Shin Yang's commitment to producing high-quality plywood with low formaldehyde emission and their adherence to sustainably managed natural and planted forests are inspiring, setting an example for environmentally conscious and socially responsible practices in the timber industry.

#### Samling Group of Companies for Most Diversified and Value-Adding Timber Manufacturer

This accolade recognises Samling's foray into high-value adding processing for the export market.

Samling's multifaceted investments span primary, secondary and tertiary processing containing sawn timber, plywood, woodchips, fibreboard, door skins, laminated boards, flooring, housing components, furniture and wood pellets.

Samling's global market compliance is attested by numerous certifications such as Japanese Industrial Standards, California Air Resources Board Certification for Composite Wood Products and ISO9001:2005 Quality Management System.

Notably, Samling's achievement as the 13<sup>th</sup>-ranked company globally and 1<sup>st</sup> in Malaysia for ESG by the International ESG transparency rating body, SPOTT, in 2022 is a testament to their commitment to excellence.

## Kursi PUSAKA Seminar

In conjunction with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) Innovation & Technology Exposition 2023, Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) in collaboration with Institute of Creative Arts and Technology (iCreaTe), UNIMAS organised *Kursi PUSAKA Seminar* from 23 to 24 August 2023 at Raia Hotel & Convention Centre, Kuching.

The seminar showcased a keynote presentation by Datu Haji Hashim Bin Haji Bojet, Advisor of STIDC, along with eleven (11) research paper sessions featuring contributions from UNIMAS and the Forest Research Institute Malaysia.

These presentations included a diverse array of subjects, including biomass for renewable energy, drying characteristics of *Acacia* planted timber, physical characteristic and protection of bamboo as well as

innovative and sustainable furniture design.

Datu Haji Hashim's keynote address resonated with a vision for the future of Sarawak timber industry, as he articulated the importance of utilising planted timber and bamboo materials in a manner that befits environmental sustainability and economic growth.

He informed that STIDC signed a Memorandum of Agreement with UNIMAS on 18 July 2016 to provide research and development (R&D) fund under Kursi PUSAKA for furniture designing programmes.

Acknowledging that significant strides have been made, more extensive R&D efforts are required to not only enhance the utilisation of planted timber and bamboo materials but also foster the development of high-value products, ultimately driving the industry towards its export target of RM8 million by the year 2030.

Laying out the STIDC's aspirations for leveraging R&D within the industry, Datu Haji Hashim delineated a multifaceted approach

such as advancing sustainable forestry practices, enhancing wood processing technologies, carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation, certification and traceability systems to name a few.

During the round table discussion, the importance of understanding consumer needs through market research and how the eco-materials can bring both environmental and economic benefits were underscored. There is an urgent need to enhance collaborative efforts in R&D and to further research the development of bamboo products.

In his concluding statements, Mr Haji Zainal Abidin Haji Abdullah, General Manager of STIDC, informed that the Seminar placed a focal point on the extensive R&D endeavor which plays a pivotal role in steering the sustainable progression of the industry.

He concurred that the establishment of a joint committee with UNIMAS would be prudent to delve into the various stages of the product value chain to understand the



Seminar in progress.

supply dynamics and market demands, and effectively bringing research findings to the stage of commercialisation. He expressed optimism in perpetuating the collaborative partnership with UNIMAS, fostering mutual advantages for both entities.

砂拉越木材工业发展机构(STIDC)和砂大创意艺术与技术学院(iCreaTe)于2023年8月23日至24日在古晋拉亚酒店及会议中心举办Kursi PUSAKA研讨会,以发表STIDC和砂大联合开展的广泛研发工作。研讨会强调需要更广泛的研发工作,以提高种植木材和竹材的运用价值,并促进高价值产品的开发。

*Perbadanan Kemajuan Perusahaan Kayu Sarawak (PUSAKA) dan Institut Seni Kreatif dan Teknologi (iCreaTe) UNIMAS telah menganjurkan Seminar Kursi PUSAKA dari 23 hingga 24 Ogos 2023 di Hotel Raia & Convention Centre, Kuching untuk mengetengahkan usaha penyelidikan dan pembangunan yang dijalankan oleh STIDC dan UNIMAS. Seminar menekankan keperluan penyelidikan dan pembangunan yang lebih meluas untuk meningkatkan penggunaan bahan kayu dan buluh yang ditanam serta memupuk pembangunan produk bernilai tinggi.*

## Seminar on Introduction to Forest Carbon Activities in Sarawak

The Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) organised a series of informative seminars titled "*Introduction to Forest Carbon Activities in Sarawak*". These seminars were conducted in various locations, including Miri on 10 July 2023; Bintulu on 12 July 2023; Sibul on 14 July 2023; and Kuching on 8 August 2023.

The Seminars aims to shed light on the latest developments and initiatives, particularly in response to the recent amendments of the Forests Ordinance and the introduction of the Forests (Forest Carbon Activity) Rules, 2022.

During his opening speech, Datu Haji Hamden Bin Mohammad the Director of Forests, emphasised the

Sarawak government's commitment to environmental sustainability, as outlined in the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy 2030. This strategy places a strong importance on achieving balanced development through green policies.

Protecting and conserving Sarawak's forests is a core focus of the government's efforts. One key strategy to achieve this is through forest carbon activities, which comprised projects aimed at mitigating greenhouse gas emissions by preserving or rehabilitating forests. These projects can lead to the generation of carbon credits, tradable units that symbolise the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Datu Haji Hamden also shared that 62% of Sarawak's land area remains forested. At present, FDS, in collaboration with other forestry agencies, is actively engaged in extensive tree planting initiatives and the implementation

of environmentally-friendly policies to ensure the preservation and rejuvenation of these vital forests. During the Seminar, Dr Malcom Demies from FDS provided insights on forest carbon activities in Sarawak, carbon credits, the carbon market, and Sarawak's initiatives related to nature-based solution projects. He also talked about the Paris Agreement, with a particular focus on Article 5, financing for forest-related activities.

Dr Malcom also explained how carbon credit system functions and where carbon credits can be traded. There are the voluntary market, where carbon credits can be voluntarily purchased to offset emissions, and the compliance market, which imposes mandatory emissions caps on specific industries. In Sarawak, the legal framework for these activities is established through the Forest (Carbon Activities) Rules, 2022.

Mr Mohamad Fuad Ahmad, the State Legal Officer, delved into the legal aspects of forest carbon activities in Sarawak. In accordance with the Forests (Amendment) Ordinance 2022, the Director of Forests has the authority to issue licenses for forest carbon activities in permanent forests, State Land, or alienated land, provided there is written approval from the Minister. He highlighted key components of the Rules, including aspects related to the forest carbon area, permit issuance, licensing procedures, as well as associated fees and royalties.

Mr Carloz Nelson Lalo, from FDS, contributed to the Seminar by providing detailed information on the process for securing a carbon study permit, outlining the necessary components such as the application checklist, study plan, and the associated fee structures.

砂拉越森林局举办一系列研讨会以介绍砂拉越的森林碳活动,并重点关注近期的监管发展。鉴于本州62%的土地仍被森林覆盖,砂拉越森林局局长拿督哈芝哈姆登莫哈末在研讨会中强调砂拉越通过碳活动实施绿色政策和森林保护的承诺。研讨会也介绍了碳信用体系、法律方面和获取许可证和执照的流程。

*Jabatan Hutan Sarawak menganjurkan satu siri seminar untuk memperkenalkan aktiviti karbon hutan di Sarawak, memfokuskan kepada perkembangan kawal selia terkini. Datu Haji Hamden Mohammad, Pengarah Hutan Sarawak menekankan komitmen Sarawak terhadap dasar hijau dan pemuliharaan hutan melalui aktiviti karbon, memandangkan 62% daripada keluasan tanah Sarawak masih kekal berhutan. Seminar memaparkan pembentangan mengenai sistem kredit karbon, aspek perundangan, proses untuk mendapatkan permit dan lesen.*

## MEF Annual General Meeting 2023

The MEF Annual General Meeting 2023 (AGM 2023) took place at Eastin Hotel Kuala Lumpur on 24 August 2023. The AGM was presided over by its president, Datuk Dr. Syed Hussain Syed Husman who discussed critical topics related to Malaysia's economy, the labour market and highlighted MEF's commitment to promoting women's leadership, with a central focus on promoting economic growth and supporting the well-being of workers.

STA Legal Counsellor, Ms Peggy Chew, who also holds the position of Honorary Secretary within MEF conducted the proceedings of the AGM 2023. The AGM 2023 received a briefing on a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing MEF's ability to comprehensively support its member companies. This ongoing effort has been making significant progress in advancing the well-being of MEF's member companies.

At the AGM 2023, several important changes to MEF Constitutional Rules were approved by a majority vote, including the addition of a new Rule 8.1A regarding nominations and amendments to various rules within the MEF Constitutional Rules. The AGM 2023 also approved and adopted the Council Report for the year 2022 and the Financial Statements for the same year.

马来西亚雇主联合会(MEF)于2023年8月24日假吉隆坡颐思酒店召开2023年常年会员大会(AGM)。大会由其主席拿督赛胡先博士主持并讨论与马来西亚经济、劳动力市场、教育和国际合作相关的重要议题。大会也批准MEF章程规则的重要修改,包括添加新规则和其他几项规则的修订。

*Mesyuarat Agung Tahunan MEF 2023 berlangsung di Hotel Eastin Kuala Lumpur pada 24 Ogos 2023. Mesyuarat tersebut dipengerusikan oleh presidennya, Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman dan membincangkan topik penting berkaitan ekonomi Malaysia, pasaran buruh, pendidikan dan kerjasama antarabangsa. Mesyuarat turut meluluskan perubahan ketara kepada peraturan perlembagaan MEF, termasuk penambahan peraturan baharu dan pindaan ke atas beberapa peraturan lain.*



## Revision of Country Specific Guidelines for Malaysia - Sarawak

The Forest Department Sarawak (FDS), Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC), Harwood Timber Sdn Bhd (HTSB) and STA met on 18 August 2023 at the FDS Headquarter, Bangunan Baitul Makmur II in Kuching. The objective of the meeting was to discuss on the revision to the Country Specific Guidelines for Malaysia – Sarawak (MCSG-Sarawak).

Presiding over the meeting was Mr Oscar John Anak Ngayop, Assistant Director of Forests. The MCSG serves as a comprehensive resource produced by the Malaysian Government to aid businesses in understanding the intricate timber regulatory framework in Malaysia. This understanding, in turn, empowers them to fulfill their due diligence responsibilities under the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation 2012*. By following these guidelines, businesses importing regulated timber products from Malaysia into Australia can ensure their practices remain compliant.

During the meeting, an extensive review of the MCSG - Sarawak took place,

with the focal point being to integrate the current and pertinent updates into the document. A pivotal change to the MCSG - Sarawak pertained to the Sarawak Timber Industry (Licensing) Regulations of 2023. The amended Regulations now cover specific provisions concerning the necessary forms, associated fees, and the procedural aspects inherent in the application process for timber industry licensing within Sarawak.

A significant outcome of these amendments is the discontinuation of STIDC's issuance of Certificate of Registration (Export, Import, Local Sales & Manufacturing) and the Sawmill Licence. Instead, these certificates will be reissued under the new Timber Industry Licence upon their respective expiration dates.

Additional modification to the MCSG-Sarawak included the Customs (Prohibition of Exports) Order 2023, whereby by the Sarawak Government has instituted the imposition of State Sales Tax (SST) on certain timber exports.

## STIDC Corporate Governance Day 2023

Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) held its Corporate Governance Day 2023 on 29 August 2023 to signify its unwavering commitment to fostering good corporate governance, in tandem with Sarawak's aim to become a world-class public service provider by year 2030.

Supported by esteemed organisations like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and others, it was inaugurated by Datuk Haji Len Talif Salleh, Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Urban Development.

The event featured four key presentations on topics like audit findings, accountability in public fund governance, risk management practices, and the Malaysian Code of Corporate Governance.

砂拉越木材工业发展机构(STIDC)机构治理日于2023年8月29日举行, 标志着该机构对于促进良好机构治理的坚定承诺, 与砂拉越于2030年成为世界一流公共服务提供机构的目标相一致。

*Hari Tadbir Urus Korporat Perbadanan Kemajuan Perusahaan Kayu Sarawak (PUSAKA) 2023 yang diadakan pada 29 Ogos 2023 menandakan komitmen kukuh PUSAKA dalam mempromosi tadbir urus korporat yang baik, sejajar dengan matlamat Sarawak untuk dikenali sebagai penyedia perkhidmatan awam bertaraf dunia menjelang 2030.*

This tax, which ranges from 1% to 2.5%, specifically applies to the export of sawn timber, veneer, woodchips, fibreboard, particle board and plywood from Sarawak.

砂拉越森林局 (FDS)、砂拉越木材工业发展机构 (STIDC)、Harwood木材有限公司 (HTSB) 连同本会于2023年8月18日召开会议, 讨论修订马来西亚 - 砂拉越国家特定准则 (MCSG-砂拉越)。MCSG 是马来西亚政府制作的综合资料, 旨在帮助企业界了解马来西亚复杂的木材监管框架。

*Jabatan Hutan Sarawak, Perbadanan Kemajuan Perusahaan Kayu Sarawak, Harwood Timber Sdn Bhd dan STA bermesyuarat pada 18 Ogos 2023 untuk membincangkan semakan Garis Panduan Khusus Negara untuk Malaysia – Sarawak (MCSG-Sarawak). MCSG merupakan dokumen komprehensif yang diterbitkan oleh Kerajaan Malaysia bagi membantu pengimport di Australia untuk memahami rangka kerja pengawalseliaan kayu di Malaysia.*

## Sarawak Customs/ Private Consultant Panel Meeting No.1/2023

The Royal Malaysian Customs Department (Customs Department) called the Sarawak Customs/Private Consultant Panel Meeting No 1/2023 on 14 August 2023 at Wisma Kastam Kuching. The Meeting was co-chaired by Dr Ahmad Taufik Bin Sulaiman, Director of Customs and Mr Ho Siew Hua, Treasurer of Kuching Chinese General Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The meeting was attended by representatives from a diverse array of sectors including forwarding, shipping, manufacturing, chambers of commerce and industry, Bumiputera enterprises, importers, traders of motor vehicles, Bumiputera

*Jabatan Kastam Diraja Malaysia telah mengumpulkan wakil-wakil daripada pelbagai sektor dalam Mesyuarat Panel Kastam Sarawak / Perunding Swasta Bil 1/2023 pada 14 Ogos 2023. Penglibatan proaktif itu menjadi landasan bagi Jabatan Kastam untuk menyelesaikan cabaran yang dihadapi oleh komuniti perniagaan tempatan dalam interaksi mereka dengan Jabatan Kastam dan melakar laluan harmoni ke hadapan untuk semua pihak berkepentingan yang terlibat.*

## Meeting with Director of Forests

STA, led by its Chief Executive Officer, Ms Annie Ting had a meeting with Datu Haji Hamden Bin Mohammad, the Director of Forests and his senior officers on 18 August 2023 at Bangunan Baitul Makmur II, Kuching.

The meeting discussed matters related to the production of reduced impact logging handbooks, guidelines on restoration within licenced areas, enhancement of log tagging system, carbon trading, inter-agency standard operating procedures and other matters related to management of forests. Both parties concurred that the meeting is beneficial and expressed the intention to engage frequently in such exchanges in the near future.



manufacturers, electronics, supporting industries and STA.

The meeting served as a platform to respond and resolve common challenges encountered by the local business community in their interactions with the Customs Department.

Additionally, the meeting served as ground for deliberations on proposals brought forth by various associations and the Customs Department itself to collaboratively find effective solutions and chart a harmonious path forward for all stakeholders involved.

Ten (10) issues with proposals were received by the Customs Department, five (5) of which were deliberated during the Panel Meeting.

The remaining queries shall be addressed through written responses from the Customs Department, given the specificity of the inquiries.

马来西亚皇家关税局于2023年8月14日召集了来自各个部门的代表以召开本年度首次砂拉越关税局和私人界顾问小组会议。此次积极的参与为关税局提供一平台, 以应对和解决当地商界在与关税局互动中所遇到的共同挑战, 并为所有利益相关者制定和谐的前进道路。



*Datu Hamden Bin Mohammad, the Director of Forests (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) flanked by his two (2) Deputies, Mr Semilan Anak Ripot (right) and Haji Happsypina Bin Sait (2<sup>nd</sup> from right). Ms Annie Ting, CEO of STA is sitting far right.*

本会在其首席执行官陈燕贞小姐的带领下于2023年8月18日与砂森林局局长拿督韩旦及其高级官员讨论与森林管理相关事宜。

*STA, diketuai oleh Ketua Pegawai Eksekutifnya, Cik Annie Ting telah membincangkan perkara-perkara berkaitan pengurusan hutan bersama Datu Haji Hamden Bin Mohammad, Pengarah Hutan dan pegawai-pegawai kanannya dalam satu mesyuarat yang diadakan pada 18 Ogos 2023.*

## Greening Malaysia Webinar Series 4: Forest Restoration and Rehabilitation

The Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia (FDPM), in collaboration with the Sabah Forestry Department (SFD), Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) and Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), successfully organised the fourth session of the Greening Malaysia Webinar Series on 4 August 2023.

With theme “Forest Restoration and Rehabilitation – Successes, Challenges and Direction”, the webinar drew approximately 400 participants.

Mr Mohd Radhi Chu bin Abdullah, Director of the Forest Plantation and Protection Division at FDPM, commenced the event where he introduced the Greening Malaysia: 100 million Trees Campaign, launched on 5 January 2021, spanning from 2021 to 2025 covering all Malaysia.

He highlighted that an impressive total of 65.8 million trees had been planted since the campaign’s launch. The webinar served as a platform for sharing information related to environmental and biodiversity aspects, falling under the umbrella of the campaign’s activities.

The primary objectives of the webinar series were strengthening the effectiveness and quality of programme implementation; identifying the scope, direction and formulating effective strategies for realising the programme; discussing programme implementation from various perspectives; and encouraging stakeholder participation in the campaign.

The Webinar was moderated by Prof. Madya Dr Mohamad Azani bin Alias, lecturer from the Faculty of Forestry and Environment at

### SPEAKERS



**HAJI MOHD RIDZUWAN BIN ENDOT**  
Director of Silviculture and Forest Biodiversity Conservation Division, FDPM



**DR. ROSDI BIN KOTER**  
Head of Forest Plantation Programme, FRIM



**MR RICKY ALISKY MARTIN**  
Deputy Head of Sustainable Forest Management (Forest Plantation) Division, SFD



**ZARINA BINTI HAJI SHEBLI**  
Head of Restoration & Industrial Forest Division, FDS

Universiti Putra Malaysia. Four (4) panel speakers contributed their expertise to the event, namely Haji Mohd Ridzuwan Bin Endot, Director of Silviculture and Forest Biodiversity Conservation Division,

FDPM; Dr Rosdi Bin Koter, Head of Forest Plantation Programme, FRIM; Mr Ricky Alisky Martin, Deputy Head of Sustainable Forest Management (Forest Plantation) Division, SFD; and Ms Zarina binti Haji Shebli, Assistant Director of Forests cum Head of Restoration and Industrial Forest Division, FDS.

The panel of speakers shared insights on the progress and achievements of restoration and rehabilitation initiatives undertaken in their respective regions.

Key programmes highlighted during the webinar included the Restoration, Reclamation and Rehabilitation Project in Peninsular Malaysia, community involvement in forest restoration and rehabilitation in Sabah, Forest Landscape Restoration programmes in Sarawak, and Communication, Education and Public Awareness programme across different regions.

Despite notable progress, various challenges were discussed, including remoteness and

accessibility to degraded areas, the need for high-quality planting materials matched to soil types, human and animal disturbance. Pests and diseases affecting indigenous tree species, shortage of manpower and expertise to conduct and monitor the programmes as well as securing financing for programmes were among also brought to attention.

The webinar’s discussions underscored several critical points for realising Malaysia’s national commitment to forest restoration and rehabilitation.

These points covered building and strengthening long-term collaborations among agencies, industries, non-governmental organisations and local communities, implementing a silviculture regime for degraded forests, facilitating gradual rejuvenation and vitality and investing in research and development to drive ongoing enhancements and innovations in support of restoration efforts.

Ms Kelley Hamrick, Senior Policy Advisory at The Nature Conservancy pointed out that although numerous Article 6 pilots between buyer and host country were established even before Article 6 pilots have been initiated between buyer and host countries, uncertainties surrounding the operationalisation of Article 6 have resulted in the majority of these endeavours remaining confined at the pilot phase, with only a limited number progressing to actual trading.

Host countries are still in the early stages of developing their domestic frameworks to comply with Article 6 requirements, which included defining what they will authorise, who will authorise trades and establishing processes to comply with reporting requirements. Even when these domestic frameworks are in place, a more complex issue will rise as host countries define what sectors and how many units they could transfer internationally without undermining the achievement of their own NDCs.

The decision to require authorisation, and thus a corresponding adjustment is at the discretion of individual countries, many of which require more information, capacity building and risk assessments before deciding on corresponding adjustment options.

For that reason, many countries have opted to be on the safe side. Indonesia, for example, placed a temporary freeze on any issuance of VCM credits from 2021-2022 before finalising its legislation this year, an approach that India is keen to take.

Overall, the webinar shed light on crucial aspects of carbon markets and their integration into global efforts for sustainable environmental practices.

生态系统市场 (EM)于2023年8月16日举办线上研讨会, 讨论政府如何参与碳市场, 以应对人们对巴黎协定第六条和自愿碳市场(VCM)日益增长的兴趣。研讨会强调, 如果高诚信地运营, VCM 可以为实现净零排放目标做出重大贡献。VCM 的供需双方都需要保持诚信实践。此外, 尽管买方和东道国之间已经启动了许多第六条试点, 围绕第六条实施的不确定性导致大多数此类努力仍局限于试点阶段, 只有有限的部分进入了实际交易。

马来西亚半岛森林局(FDPM)联合沙巴森林局 (SFD)、砂拉越森林局(FDS)和马来西亚森林研究所(FRIM)于2023年8月4日举办绿化马来西亚线上研讨会。该研讨会提供了有关马来西亚森林恢复和重建的进展、挑战和策略的宝贵见解, 为相关可持续林业和环境保护更广泛的全球对话做出贡献。

*Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia (JPSM) dengan kerjasama Jabatan Perhutanan Sabah (SFD), Jabatan Hutan Sarawak (FDS) dan Institut Penyelidikan Perhutanan Malaysia (FRIM) telah menganjurkan Siri Ke-4 Webinar Penghijauan Malaysia pada 4 Ogos 2023. Webinar tersebut menyalurkan maklumat tentang kemajuan, cabaran dan strategi yang berkaitan dengan restorasi dan rehabilitasi hutan di Malaysia serta menyumbang ke arah perbincangan global mengenai perhutanan mampan dan pemeliharaan alam sekitar.*

*The Ecosystem Marketplace (EM) menganjurkan webinar pada 16 Ogos 2023 untuk membincangkan langkah kerajaan yang terlibat dengan pasaran karbon sebagai tindak balas kepada peningkatan minat di sekitar Perkara 6 dan Pasaran Karbon Sukarela (VCM). Ditegaskan bahawa jika dikendalikan dengan integriti tinggi, VCM boleh memberikan sumbangan penting dalam mencapai sasaran bersih-sifar. Amalan integriti perlu dikekalkan di kedua-dua bahagian penawaran dan permintaan VCM. Walaupun banyak perintis Perkara 6 telah dimulakan di antara negara pembeli dan tuan rumah, ketidakpastian yang menyelubungi pengoperasian Perkara 6 telah menyebabkan sebahagian besar usaha ini masih terhad kepada fasa perintis, dengan hanya sebilangan kecil yang mencapai perdagangan sebenar.*

## Webinar on Classification of Bamboo in Chapter 44, Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States Annotated

The United States (US) Customs and Border Protection organised a webinar on 2 August 2023 focusing on the classification of Bamboo in Chapter 44 of the Harmonised Tariff Schedule of the US Annotated (HTSUS).

Ms Laurel Duvall, National Import Specialist from the US Customs and Border Protection briefed online participants on how US Customs and Border Protection classify types of bamboo products imported into USA under Chapter 44 of HTSUS. A significant portion of these imported bamboo products are intended for the construction industry, including plywood panels, flooring panels, and builders' joinery.

In her presentation, Ms Duvall explained that the process of carbonising plywood does not exert any influence on the classification of bamboo products. Instead, the primary determinant for classification lies in the construction of the bamboo products themselves, as well as their inherent characteristics. In this regard, she introduced three (3) prevalent methods of bamboo construction, namely horizontal, vertical and strand assembly, all of which are commonly found within assembled flooring panels in the US market. She also shared that bamboo goods cannot be classified within category 4409 of the HTSUS.

This ruling stems from the fact that these bamboo products are not made of solid wood; rather, they are composed of multiple pieces such as strips expertly bonded together or strands aggregated to form a cohesive whole.

Ms Duvall underscored a crucial guideline for importers to adhere to. She emphasised that bamboo product samples submitted for binding rulings on classification should not exceed 6 inches in size. This pragmatic guideline serves to ensure an efficient and accurate classification process.

美国海关和边境保护局于2023年8月2日举办线上研讨会，重点讨论美国协调关税表 (HTSUS)第44章中的竹子分级。据了解，碳化复合板的过程对竹制品的分级没有任何影响。然儿，分级竹制品的主要决定因素在于竹制品本身的构造。

*Jabatan Kastam dan Perlindungan Sempadan Amerika Syarikat (AS) menganjurkan webinar pada 2 Ogos 2023 mengenai klasifikasi Buluh dalam Bab 44 Jadual Tarif Harmoni Beranotasi AS (HTSUS). Difahamkan bahawa proses pengkarbonan papan lapis tidak memberi sebarang pengaruh terhadap klasifikasi produk buluh. Sebaliknya, beliau menekankan bahawa penentu utama klasifikasi terletak pada pembuatan produk buluh itu sendiri.*

## Circular Economy Conference 2023

As part of its commitment to fostering knowledge-sharing in support of the important environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda, Star Media Group Berhad organised the Circular Economy Conference 2023 with theme "Green Investments towards a Circular Economy" on 15 August 2023. The one-day virtual conference featured 25 speakers from globally recognised businesses who shared their expertise on building a circular economy that looks beyond the mass production of products and harness resources to their utmost potential to curtail wastage and enhance energy efficiency.

Mr Andy Cheah, Head of Wholesale Banking, UOB Malaysia, opened the event with a welcoming speech that emphasised a crucial notion: the circular economy is not merely a boon for the environment; it also presents immense business and investment opportunity, propelled by technological advancements that revolve around resource management.

Mr Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Local Government Development, brought attention to a pressing concern, in his keynote address – the alarming increase in waste production from the existing linear technological approach and rapid expansion of urban areas.

## Mitigation Sub-Committee Meeting No.2/2023 on Compliance with International Trade Laws in Timber Industry

The Ministry of Plantation and Commodities (MPC) organised the Mitigation Sub-Committee Meeting No 2/2023 on Compliance with International Trade Laws in the Timber Industry on 22 August 2023 at the headquarter of the Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia (FDPM) in Kuala Lumpur.

Chaired by Mr Wan Ahmad Asmady bin Wan Md Din, Senior Undersecretary of MPC, the meeting was attended by representatives from Forest Departments of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak; Malaysian Timber Council (MTC); Malaysian Timber Certification Council; Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB); Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation; Sabah Timber Industry Association; and STA.

Mr Adam Nazri from the MTC presented a report on MTC's recent visit to Europe to discuss the European Union (EU) Deforestation-free Regulation (EUDR). He highlighted that Malaysia's exports to the EU in 2022 amounted to RM1,454.41 million.

He further highlighted the escalating costs associated with collecting and managing this mounting waste, underscoring the need for a more sustainable and effective way forward. He urged businesses to embrace circular design principles, such as the 9R's – *Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture, Repurpose, Recycle and Recover*; to maximise the value of products, materials and contribute to environmental preservation.

Throughout the event, penaltists and case studies emphasised the importance for businesses to adopt a long-term perspective when undertaking the transformative journey from linear to circular economy. While initial costs and perceived challenges may exist, businesses that are ahead of the trend will not only gain competitive advantage but also obtain preferential access to customers.

Therefore, businesses are advised to assess their business model, identify waste generation

sources, recognise that disposing of these wastes incur disposal costs that will impact their bottom line and work towards closed-loop processes.

The necessity for change is particularly pronounced within the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as there are more SMEs in Asia than in any other region in the world. Circularity does not exist in silos; it permeates throughout the supply chain.

Critical catalysts for this change include securing internal buy-in, receiving top down support and fostering collaboration and partnership. Governmental intervention also plays a pivotal role in this transition. By offering accessible funding options, governments can alleviate the financial gap, making the transition less onerous.

Undoubtedly, when equipped with a clear understanding of what is practically attainable and the accompanying risks, businesses can navigate their path towards circular economy with confidence.

He explained the background of EUDR, which came into effect on 29 June 2023, with full operations scheduled after 18 months. The regulation covers products like oil palm, soy, wood, cocoa, coffee, beef, rubber, and their derivatives.

He also discussed key takeaways from interactions with EUDR stakeholders. He noted that the European Commission did not fully take into account feedback from MTC and EU Competent Authorities faced capacity and manpower challenges in enforcing EUDR. The meeting also addressed challenges in implementing geolocation and discussed the concept of country benchmarking.

The meeting also included a report by Mr Mazree Iman from the MTIB following the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's Expert Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT) in Seattle, United States. He highlighted efforts to combat illegal logging and

promote legal forest products in countries such as Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and New Zealand.

The EGILAT Capacity-Building Workshop on Tools and Technology for Timber Legality was discussed, where technologies like *XylorixPocketWood*, *XyloTron*, Global Forest Watch, Wood Ider, and Automatic Wood Identification System were showcased.

Besides that, there were in-depth discussions about the Communication Action Plan, which aims to integrate activities and programmes across the three

*Kementerian Perladangan dan Komoditi telah menganjurkan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Kecil Mitigasi Bil. 2/2023 memfokuskan kepada Pematuhan Undang-undang Perdagangan Antarabangsa dalam Industri Perakayuan pada 22 Ogos 2023 di ibu pejabat Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia di Kuala Lumpur.*

*Dalam mesyuarat tersebut, satu laporan yang memperincikan perbincangan di Eropah mengenai Peraturan Bebas Penyahutanan Kesatuan Eropah telah dibentangkan oleh Majlis Kayu-Kayan Malaysia. Lembaga Perindustrian Kayu Malaysia turut berkongsi pandangan daripada penyertaan mereka dalam Mesyuarat Kumpulan Pakar Kerjasama Ekonomi Asia Pasifik ke-24 mengenai Pembalakan Haram dan Perdagangan Bersekutu (EGILAT) di Seattle, Amerika Syarikat.*



星传媒集团在其主题为“循环经济的绿色投资”的2023年循环经济大会上聚集了可持续发展倡导者，以打造一个交流创新解决方案的平台。藉此大会，企业界能够踏上一条不仅可持续而且经济可行的道路。大会建议寻求采用循环实践的企业评估其业务模式，确定废物产生源，认识到处置这些废物会产生影响其利润的处置成本，并努力实施闭环流程，以最大限度地减少废物并最大限度地提高资源效率。

*Kumpulan Media Star Berhad mengumpulkan penyokong-penyokong kemampanan dalam Persidangan Ekonomi Kitaran 2023 dengan tema "Pelaburan Hijau ke arah Ekonomi Kitaran" untuk mewujudkan platform bagi pertukaran penyelesaian inovatif. Dengan berbuat demikian, persidangan dapat memperkasakan perniagaan untuk memulakan perniagaan mampan dan berdaya maju dari segi ekonomi. Perniagaan yang berhasrat mengamalkan amalan kitaran dinasihatkan untuk menilai model perniagaan mereka, mengenal pasti sumber penajanaan sisa, menyedari bahawa pelupusan sisa memerlukan kos yang akan memberi kesan kepada keuntungan mereka dan berusaha ke arah pelaksanaan proses tertutup untuk meminimumkan sisa dan memaksimumkan kecekapan sumber.*

(3) regions. After the meeting, attendees received briefings on forest management in Peninsular Malaysia, followed by a tour of the Gallery of the FDPM.

马来西亚种植与原产业部(KPK)于2023年8月22日在吉隆坡马来西亚半岛森林局总部召开本年度第二次缓解小组委员会会议，重点讨论木材工业遵守国际贸易法事项。会议期间，马来西亚木材理事会上提呈一份内容丰富的报告，说明他们近期在欧洲进行有关欧盟无毁林法规的讨论会。此外，马来西亚木材工业局分享他们参加在美国西雅图举行的第24届亚太经合组织非法采伐及相关贸易专家小组(EGILAT)会议的见解。





## MTC's Virtual Marketing Seminar 2023

The Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) organised the Virtual Marketing Seminar 2023 via TimberReality Platform on 29 August 2023. Mr Moktar Mohd Yaacob, MTC's Acting Chief Operations Officer greeted industry players from three (3) regions of Malaysia and hoped that the participants will gain knowledge and insights from experts' discussions on latest global trade and market updates.

Seven (7) papers were delivered during the Seminar. Mr Andy Johnson, Assistant Editor for the Hardwood Market Report discussed the economic trends as well as the current and future outlook of wood products markets in the United States of America (USA).

USA annual inflation rate currently stands at 3%, lower compared to 9% last year. Generally, all importation of wood products, with exception to solid hardwood flooring, which peaked during pandemic period shall revert to pre-pandemic period.

Mr Ngo Sy Hoai, Vice-President and Secretary-General of Vietnam Timber & Forest Products Association mentioned that following the ban on logging in natural forests in 2016, local wood suppliers have been relying on 3 million hectares of commercial plantation (mostly *Acacia*) to produce 30 to 40 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood annually. Additionally, they also acquired approximately 3 to 4 million m<sup>3</sup> rubber wood annually from 1 million hectares of rubber plantations. He attributed Vietnam's rapid growth to cheap labour force and abundant plantation wood.

Vietnam is currently transforming from extensive labour & raw

material consumption to cost-effective and high valued-added growth development.

Ar Ann James, Creative Director of FitoutZ Group highlighted the growing acceptance of timber usage within India's construction industry, while Mr Amin Hassan, Senior Architect of Hopkins Architects spoke on the prospects of the robust construction in the Middle East.

Mr Li Jia Feng, President of China Timber & Wood Products Distribution Association presented the overall supply and demand of the Chinese timber market. In 2022, China's total wood consumption was 600 million m<sup>3</sup>, with both construction and paper industry accounting for 30% of the consumption and furniture at 12%.

Mr Vasyly Masyuk, Senior Expert of Forestry and Woodworking Development Institute Ukraine provided updates on the importation and exportation of wood and furniture in the Eastern European region covering Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Poland and Romania. Mr Masyuk foresees that Ukraine will be the world's largest construction site over the next 3 to 10 years, with the initiation of Rebuild Ukraine project.

Ms Françoise Van de Ven, President of International Tropical Timber Technical Association informed participants that the slowdown of the importation of tropical wood and wooden furniture into Western European is expected to persist. The market exhibited a vigorous recovery in the first half of 2022 following the COVID-19 crisis but decline in the subsequent months.

## Discussion on the Implementation of Global Timber Index and Global Legal & Sustainable Timber Forum 2023

A discussion on the implementation of the Global Timber Index (GTI) and the Global Legal & Sustainable Timber Forum (GLSTF) 2023 took place on 22 August 2023, at the Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia's headquarter in Kuala Lumpur.

The GTI Platform, established by the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), aims to create an information hub for global timber enterprises based on the GTI.

Various factors contributed to the slowdown, including large stocks purchased at higher prices, decisions by CITES on species from Africa, sluggish construction sector and unemployment. The seminar also featured three (3) interactive questions and answers session, moderated by Ms Alexis Chang, MTC Director of Market Promotion and Product Development Division.

Participants engaged in discussions about topics such as the current import and export trends of timber products in USA and China, Vietnam's plantation progress and species, India's acceptance of mass timbers, recognition of Malaysian certifications, restoration and construction in Ukraine, and more.

马来西亚木材理事会于2023年8月29日举办2023年虚拟营销研讨会,发表多份主题文章,包括美国木材市场、越南木材贸易、印度木材前景、中国木材市场、中东建筑业以及欧洲木材趋势。这些见解加上互动问答环节使参与者对全球木材贸易动态和未来前景有更深入的了解。

Seminar Pemasaran Maya 2023 telah dianjurkan oleh Majlis Kayu-Kayan Malaysia pada 29 Ogos 2023. Pembentangan pelbagai topik termasuk pasaran kayu Amerika Syarikat, perdagangan kayu Vietnam, prospek kayu India, pasaran kayu China, pembinaan Timur Tengah dan aliran kayu Eropah telah disampaikan semasa Seminar. Maklumat tersebut serta sesi soal jawab interaktif telah meningkatkan pemahaman peserta tentang dinamik perdagangan kayu global dan prospek masa depan.

This platform facilitates the exchange of business information and data, fostering collaboration among stakeholders on both national and international scales. The goal is to develop green supply chains for legal and sustainable forest products, thereby increasing the trade of legally and sustainably sourced forest products within a stable, transparent, and predictable business environment.

Mr Wan Ahmad Asmady, Senior Undersecretary of the Ministry of Plantation and Commodities Malaysia, extended a warm welcome to Dr Luo Xinjian, Secretary General, and Ms Sydney Gao, Director of Public Relations, both representing the esteemed Global Green Supply Chain (GGSC) organisation. He shared that Malaysia, as one of the participating countries in the initial phase of the GTI project, aims to demonstrate its commitment and support in building legal and sustainable forest supply chains.

Dr Luo and Ms Gao provided insights into the GLSTF 2023, a collaborative endeavour between the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and ITTO, organised by the Secretariat of the GGSC. The event is scheduled to take place at the Galaxy International Convention Centre in Macao, China, from 21 to 22 November 2023.

The GLSTF's objectives include fostering networking, collaboration, and business exchange among stakeholders

in the global timber sector. It also aims to promote sustainable forest management, establish legal and sustainable forest product supply chains, facilitate the legal and sustainable use and trade of timber within a stable, transparent, and predictable business environment, and ultimately contribute to sustainable development and climate change mitigation. Both Dr Luo and Ms Gao extended invitation to Malaysia to participate in the GLSTF.

全球木材指数(GTI)的实施和2023年全球合法与可持续木材论坛(GLSTF)的相关讨论会议于2023年8月22日在位于吉隆坡的马来西亚半岛森林局总部召开。GTI平台是由国际热带木材组织(ITTO)发起的倡议,旨在建立合法与可持续林产品供应链。另一方面, GLSTF的目的是为了促进全球木材行业的利益相关者之间的人脉、合作和业务交流,以进一步促进木材行业的可持续性和合法性。

Satu perbincangan mengenai pelaksanaan Global Timber Index (GTI) dan Global Legal & Sustainable Timber Forum (GLSTF) 2023 telah berlangsung pada 22 Ogos 2023 di ibu pejabat Jabatan Perhutanan Semenanjung Malaysia di Kuala Lumpur. Platform GTI merupakan inisiatif yang dilancarkan oleh Pertubuhan Kayu Tropika Antarabangsa untuk membina rantaian bekalan produk hutan yang sah dan mampan. GLSTF pula bertujuan untuk meningkatkan rangkaian, kerjasama, dan pertukaran perniagaan dalam kalangan pemegang taruh sektor perkayuan global bagi memajukan lagi kemampanan dan kesahihan dalam sektor perkayuan.

## Special Voluntary Disclosure Programme 2.0 Briefing

STA attended the Special Voluntary Disclosure Programme (SVDP) 2.0 Briefing organised by Sarawak Business Federation (SBF) on 30 August 2023 at SCCI Kuching. In his opening remarks, Datuk Philip Ting, Deputy President of SBF expressed his hope that this briefing would provide attendees with a better understanding on the latest programme offered by the Inland Revenue Board Malaysia (IRBM).

Madam Cheong Yit Hui from the Company & Non Company Tax Audit Unit of IRBM mentioned that SVDP 2.0, announced on 2 June 2023, aims to provide an opportunity for taxpayers to voluntarily report their income and tax computations that are accurate and orderly in line with the IRBM rulings as well as encouraging taxpayers to pay taxes within the stipulated period.

The SVDP 2.0 will run from 6 June 2023 until 31 May 2024. During this period, no penalties and surcharges will be imposed on taxpayers.

IRBM will receive the voluntary disclosure of information in good faith, and will not carry out either audit or investigation on the year(s) of assessment relating to the income declared voluntarily.

IRBM had identified four (4) categories of taxpayers eligible for SVDP 2.0 participation:

- (i) new taxpayers who have never declared income to the IRBM but have commenced a business or have received income;
- (ii) existing taxpayers who have previously declared income to IRBM and still have income / additional income not declared;
- (iii) taxpayers who have not declared disposal of assets; and
- (iv) duty payer who submits any document / agreement that has been executed (signed) on or before 1 May 2023 for stamping from 6 June 2023 to 31 May 2024.

Taxpayers who are currently under audit or investigation are not eligible to participate in SVDP 2.0.

Further information on SVDP 2.0 is available on IRBM's website at <https://www.hasil.gov.my/en/special-voluntary-disclosure-programme-svdp-20/>.

自愿申报特别计划(SVDP)2.0为纳税人提供补报正确的纳税状况并纠正过去所犯的错误的机会。马来西亚内陆税收局(IRBM)将诚心地接受这些自愿申报。该局不会对自愿申报的估税年度(YAs)进行任何审计或调查。

Program Khas Pengakuan Sukarela 2.0 memberi peluang kepada pembayar cukai untuk melaporkan kedudukan cukai yang betul dan membetulkan kesilapan pelaporan lepas. Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri Malaysia memaklumkan bahawa ianya akan menerima pendedahan sukarela itu dengan terbuka dan tiada audit atau penyiasatan lanjut untuk tahun taksiran yang mana pendedahan sukarela tersebut dibuat.

## Labour Dialogue with Minister of Human Resources and Deputy Minister in the Premier of Sarawak's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring)

The Labour Department Sarawak (LDS) under the Ministry of Human Resources organised a labour dialogue on 26 August 2023 at Raia Hotel & Convention Centre, Kuching.

The event brought together key figures including Minister of Human Resources, Mr V Sivakumar and Deputy Minister in the Premier of Sarawak's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring), Datuk Gerawat Gala to engage in a 2-way exchange with representatives from various sectors.

Mr V Sivakumar emphasised the significance of the platform for sharing insights, feedback, suggestions, and other inputs related to labour concerns, particularly within the context of Sarawak.

He pledged to actively address and facilitate discussions on these matters, enlisting the cooperation of various agencies under the Ministry of Human Resources and called upon employers' representatives to explore avenues for creating employment opportunities for local workers. This approach would not only bolster the local workforce's capabilities but also contribute to ensuring the effective implementation of labour laws and regulations.

Throughout the dialogue, employers representative raised issues related to minimum wage, the progressive wage system, employee termination and the optimal utilisation of HRD Corp funding especially among small and medium enterprises in Sarawak.

隶属于人力资源部的砂拉越劳工局于2023年8月26日假古晋拉亚酒店及会议中心举办劳工对话会。人力资源部部长西华古玛先生和砂拉越总理署副部长(劳工、移民及项目监督)格拉瓦加拉与各行业代表进行双向交流。在对话会中,雇主代表提出相关最低薪金、渐进式薪金制度、雇员解雇以及砂拉越中小企业善用人力资源发展机构(HRD Corp)基金的问题。

Jabatan Tenaga Kerja Sarawak, di bawah Kementerian Sumber Manusia telah menganjurkan dialog buruh pada 26 Ogos 2023 di Hotel Raia and Convention Centre di Kuching. Menteri Sumber Manusia, Encik V Sivakumar dan Datuk Gerawat Gala, Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier Sarawak (Buruh, Imigresen dan Pemantauan Projek) terlibat dalam pertukaran 2 hala dengan wakil-wakil daripada pelbagai sektor. Melalui dialog tersebut, wakil majikan membangkitkan isu berkaitan gaji minimum, sistem gaji progresif, pemberhentian pekerja dan penggunaan optimum pembiayaan HRD Corp terutamanya dalam kalangan perusahaan kecil dan sederhana di Sarawak.



## Meeting of MEF East Malaysia Region Members No.8/2023

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) East Malaysia (Sarawak) Region convened its Meeting No.8/2023 on 21 August 2023. The online meeting was presided over by Ms Dayang Jamillah Tun Abg Muhd Salahuddin, Consultant-Industrial Relations of MEF Sarawak.

Mr Zahari bin Harun, an Officer of the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) in Putrajaya was present at the meeting to talk about the Employment Insurance System (EIS) Act. This legislation provides financial support to employees who have lost their jobs, assist them in finding new employment

opportunities through job replacement programmes as well as enhancing their employability through training and vocational programmes. He clarified that contributors who lose their job as a result of employee misconduct, voluntary resignation, retirement or the expiration of a fixed-term contract are ineligible for EIS benefits.

Mr Muhammad Hasrul bin Arshad, an Officer of the Trade Union Affairs Department Sarawak (TUADS), presented an insightful overview of TUADS, including its background, vision, mission, primary activities and the relevant Act and regulations governing its operations. Operating under the Ministry of Human Resource, TUADS is tasked with regulating trade union activities to foster a harmonious relationship between employees and employers.

Mr Muhammad Hasrul highlighted that TUADS has taken proactive measures by launching training programmes for appointed officers in trade unions to enhance negotiation skills and cultivate harmonious relationships with employers.

马来西亚雇主联合会(MEF)东马(砂拉越)区域邀请社会保险机构和砂拉越职工会事务局官员于2023年8月21日举行线上会议,介绍2017年就业保险制度(EIS)法令以及职工会程序。

Persekutuan Majikan-Majikan Malaysia Wilayah Malaysia Timur (Sarawak) menjemput pegawai-pegawai daripada Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial dan Jabatan Hal Ehwal Kesatuan Sekerja Sarawak dalam mesyuarat dalam talian pada 21 Ogos 2023 untuk memberi taklimat mengenai Akta Sistem Insurans Pekerjaan (EIS) serta Prosedur Kesatuan Sekerja.

## MEF-ILO Knowledge Tools for Employers

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), has conducted a series of workshop on MEF-Safe Workshop on MEF-ILO Knowledge Tools for Employers on Investigation Procedure, Discrimination at the Workplace and Flexible Work Arrangements.

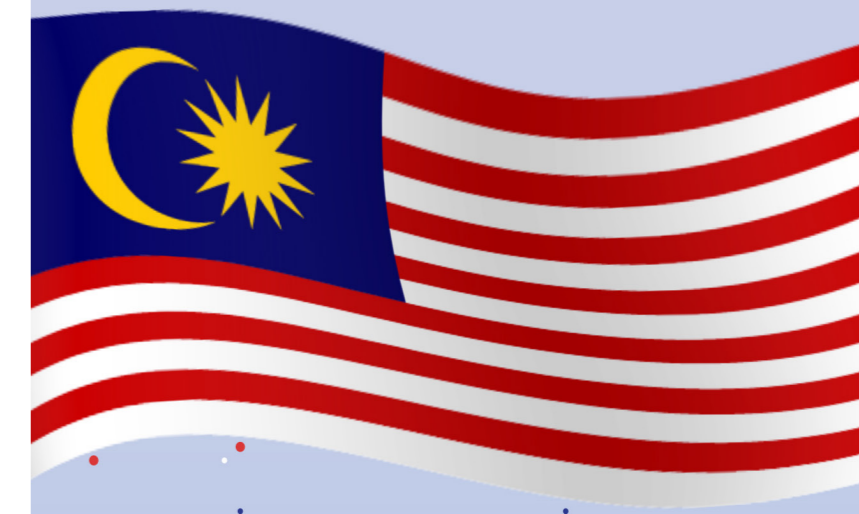
During the most recent workshop on 17 August 2023 at Pullman Hotel Kuching, Datuk Haji Shamsuddin Bardan, the Executive Director of MEF emphasised the importance of employers adhering to international standards regarding forced labor. This compliance is mandated by the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and ILO Conventions, with potential sanctions for non-compliance.

The workshop also featured three (3) key presentations from Datuk Haji Shamsuddin Bardan and Mr Justine Lee, Senior Consultant – Industrial Relations of MEF. Datuk Haji Shamsuddin Bardan emphasized the importance of thorough investigations in cases of violence, harassment, and sexual harassment, especially involving female migrant workers. Employers were urged to assess their practices and adhere to sexual harassment prevention guidelines.

Meanwhile, Mr Lee spoke on flexible working policies, though not mandated by the Employment Act 1955 (EA 1955), are recommended for clarity on flexible work arrangements. He also highlighted recent EA 1955 amendments protecting employees from workplace discrimination. Employers should raise awareness among employees about their right to report employment discrimination, ensuring confidentiality and no retaliation.

马来西亚雇主联合会(MEF)和国际劳工组织(ILO)举办一系列工作坊,以提高雇主对遵守国际劳工标准的认识,关注于国际协议规定的强迫劳动等课题。工作坊涵盖有关职场暴力的更高层次的调查指南、公司弹性工作安排政策以及消除职场歧视的介绍。

Persekutuan Majikan-Majikan Malaysia dan Pertubuhan Buruh Antarabangsa mengadakan satu siri bengkel untuk meningkatkan kesedaran dalam kalangan majikan tentang pematuhan piawai buruh antarabangsa dengan memberi tumpuan kepada isu buruh paksa seperti yang dimandatkan oleh perjanjian antarabangsa. Garis panduan siasatan lanjutan berkaitan keganasan di tempat kerja, dasar syarikat untuk susunan kerja fleksibel dan penghapusan diskriminasi di tempat kerja telah dibentangkan semasa bengkel.



Happy 16<sup>th</sup> September  
Malaysia Day

From the Chairman, Council Members, Management and Staff of STA, STA Enterprises Sdn Bhd, STA Mutual Sdn Bhd and STA Training Sdn Bhd

Pengerusi, Ahli-Ahli Majlis, Pihak Pengurusan dan Kakitangan STA, STA Enterprises Sdn Bhd, STA Mutual Sdn Bhd dan STA Training Sdn Bhd ingin mengucapkan Selamat Hari Malaysia kepada semua warga Malaysia.

本会主席,理事会,管理委员会和STA秘书处, STA Enterprises有限公司, STA Mutual有限公司和STA Training有限公司全体职员在此祝愿所有马来西亚人民马来西亚日快乐。



STA TRAINING SDN BHD

## OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

# AUGUST 2023

Skills training in forestry activities have been designed to provide forest workmen with basic knowledge and practical skills required to work safely in the forests. It helps to create awareness on the environment, sustainable forest management as well as occupational safety and health.

STA Training Sdn Bhd (STAT), a subsidiary company of STA, offers training to workmen in the forestry and timber industry. Presently, there are twelve (12) skills sets offered by STAT.

For this month, STAT conducted ground operator training programme as follows:



**Tree Felling-Chainsaw (Natural Forest), Log Extraction-Tractor (Natural Forest), Mechanical Site Preparation-Excavator (Forest Plantation), and Clear-fell Site Preparation (Forest Plantation)**

**STAT Trainer / Assessor** : Mr Ginda Uli & Mr Ngumbang Bayang

**Date** : 15 - 18 August 2023

**Location** : Kejin Camp, Baram

**Company** : Shin Yang Sdn Bhd

*Under Section 51 of the Forests Ordinance 2015, forest workmen are required to receive training from a training provider and demonstrate their competence through assessment. STA Training Sdn Bhd (STAT) is the appointed training provider by Forest Department Sarawak to provide skills training for the five (5) prescribed forestry activities (PFAs) as listed in Schedule 1 The Forests (Trained Workmen) Rules, 2015.*

## GET IN TOUCH

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