

'Timber sector needs change for sake of downstream activities'

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KUCHING: The state timber industry needs a wholesome change to further develop its downstream activities.

Second Minister of Resource Planning and Environment Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan said the use of the latest technology and more research and development (R&D) must be adopted and practised by the timber industry to increase productivity in the downstream activities.

He said the state's current installed capacity was about 11 million cubic metres, compared to the annual log production of seven million cubic metres per year.

Based on this scenario, he urged the timber industry players to upgrade their technology in order to improve production and recovery from log processing due to the depletion of raw materials and planted forests being not in full capacity yet.

"We have to really look into the whole change of our timber industry to further develop the downstream activities. There is a need for the processing industry like saw mills and plywood manufacturers to upgrade their technology to maximise whatever we have. This is the way forward," he told reporters yesterday after he officiated at the 2017 Lean Management seminar (Sarawak region) at Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK) here.

Awang Tengah, who is also Minister of Industrial and Entrepreneur Development, Trade and Investment, said the timber industry must intensify the R&D initiative to produce more value-added products to increase their recovery rate.

"In line with our tagline 'nothing goes to waste', timber industry players should consider producing by-products such as pellets (biomass), charcoal briquettes, furniture components and wood-based products to add value to the log input of the state's primary processing industry."

He called upon industry players to work closely with agencies, which have already established R&D facilities and capabilities, believing that the state would be able to fully develop the downstream activities provided new technology was adopted and R&D intensified.

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