

# Malaysia's forest resources are managed sustainably, says Teresa Kok

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KUALA LUMPUR (Nov 19): Malaysia's forest resources are managed sustainably to ensure availability of timber and timber products amid concerns from developed markets towards the environment.

Minister of Primary Industries Teresa Kok said as a responsible global player, Malaysia's timber industry has established high credibility to provide quality, legal and sustainable timber according to market demand.

"As at September 2019, 4.31 million hectares of our forests are certified under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS)'s Programme for the Endorsement of the Forest Certification," she said in her speech at the launch of Malaysian Wood Expo 2019 here today.

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Malaysia Timber Council chairman Datuk Low Kian Chuan was also present.

To date, a cumulative total of 2.06 million cubic metres of MTCS certified timber and timber products have been exported to 68 countries.

Kok said ensuring sufficient supply of raw material was one of the important thrusts under the National Timber Industry Policy.

"In this regard, the government has established a forest plantation fund to reduce pressure on native forest. In addition, the industry is also encouraged to utilise alternative materials from non-timber and bio-mass such as bamboo and oil palm trunk," she added.

Meanwhile, Kok said throughout the years, the timber industry has remained relatively stable and achieved an export value of RM22.3 billion in 2018.

Currently, Malaysia has over 3,500 mills located mostly in the peninsula, which constituted around 83% while the remaining 17% are in Sabah and Sarawak.

Kok said the Malaysian furniture industry had also undergone transformational changes over the years and has become a vibrant industry that contributes significantly to Malaysia's economy.

In 2018, the total export value for furniture products reached RM9.83 billion, out of which wooden furniture contributed to RM7.79 billion.

The Malaysian Wood Expo is jointly organised by the Malaysian Timber Council and Panel & Furniture Group.

The three-day event is being held from today to Nov 21.