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## Press Releases

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### **COLLABORATIONS TO ADDRESS LABOUR, RAW MATERIAL SHORTAGES**

Thursday 28/07/2022

**KUALA LUMPUR, July 28 (Bernama)** -- The Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) has inked two memorandums in conjunction with the Malaysia International Agricommodity Expo and Summit (MiACES) 2022 held at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC) here, today.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between MTC and the Technical and Vocational Education Training Division (BPLTV) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to increase the number of local manpower in the timber sector whilst reducing the dependence on foreign labour as well as to support the development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the country.

This MoU is vital as it encourages the sharing of expertise and technology between industry players and the educational institution, as well as to promote technical education. This is part of MTC's initiatives to collaborate with vocational colleges by providing internship placement as well as a ready-to-work programme for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students and graduates for the timber-based industry through MTC's Engineer Placement and Internship Programme (EPIP).

The Engineer Placement programme is a one-year programme for engineers to receive on-the-job training under the guidance of a professional while the Internship Programme is open to undergraduates who are doing their industrial training. The programme will boost graduates' marketability and strengthen the development of the timber industry.

MTC has taken an initiative to assist the timber sector by introducing the EPIP in March 2021 for engineers, wood technology graduates as well as undergraduates to be absorbed into timber-based companies for training and internship purposes that may lead to them building successful careers in the timber industry. As of 15 July 2022, a total of 350 graduates and 620 students have applied to be part of the EPIP programme. Whereas from the timber industry, 79 companies have sent their application to participate in the programme.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the timber industry was already experiencing labour shortages which was further compounded after the outbreak of the virus which led to countries closing their borders to curb the spread of COVID-19. This has led to some factories shutting down their operations.

"By having this collaboration between MTC and BPLTV, we hope this provides opportunities for the students to develop their careers in the timber industry. There is a need for more young people to lead and transform the timber sector into an innovation-led industry" said MTC's Chairman Madam Hajah Norrida Yusoff.

She added, "MTC will also absorb the training cost as well as provide the monthly allowances for the engineering graduates and interns. This could also reduce the burden faced by the timber industry in sourcing manpower and we hope that this initiative will reduce dependence of foreign labour."

The timber industry is on the lookout for more local graduates as it moves into the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0). These are part of the Council's strategic plan, which includes intensifying IR4.0 adoption.

The MoU was signed by the MTC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Muhtar Suhaili and BPLTV Senior Deputy Director Mr. Zulkernai Fauzi. It was witnessed by the Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC) YB Datuk Hajah Zuraida Kamaruddin, Secretary General MPIC Datuk Ravi Muthayah and MTC Chairman Madam Hajah Norrida Yusoff. Also present at the ceremony were the MPIC Deputy Secretary General (Plantation & Commodities) Mr. Mad Zaidi Mohd Karli, MPIC Deputy Secretary General (Strategic Planning & Management) Mr. Abdul Hadi Omar, and MoE Full Boarding School Management Division Director Madam Faridah Yang Razali.

MTC also signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Malaysian Panel-Products Manufacturers' Association (MPMA) to carry out a Community

Farming Project valued at RM1.5 million to establish plantations of fast-growing timber species among local communities to address the shortage of timber raw material faced by the timber industry. The MoA was signed by MTC CEO Mr. Muhtar Suhaili and MPMA Chairman Datuk Wira Sheikh Othman Rahman.

“The project collaboration is to encourage a sustainable supply of timber raw material for the panel products manufacturers and become less reliant on importation. This will also reduce the dependence on resources from the natural forest.” said Muhtar.

“In addition, this will alleviate the livelihood of the local community by having an additional source of income through the community farming project and encourage afforestation of idle land for the economic value”, added Muhtar.

Among the species to be planted are *Eucalyptus pellita*, *Eucalyptus deglupta*, *Paraserianthes facaltaria* and Kelampayan. The planting sites are in Pokok Sena, Kedah, Kuantan, Pahang, Gemas, Negeri Sembilan and Ipoh, Perak which will cover approximately 162 hectares of land.

MTC also launched its first-ever online MTC Timber TV channel, an additional medium to disseminate the latest news and information on the timber industry. The channel is accessible via MTC’s YouTube page and is available for free across a range of devices and with no registration required.

1. YB Zuraida after the MoU signing between MTC and BPLTV. With her are (from left) Datuk Ravi Muthayah, Madam Hajah Norrida Yusoff, MTC CEO Mr. Muhtar, Mr. Zulkernai Fauzi, Madam Faridah Yang Razali, Mr. Mad Zaidi Mohd Karli and Deputy Secretary-General (Strategic Planning & Management) Mr. Abdul Hadi Omar: [https://mtc.com.my/MIACES/DSC\\_0281.JPG](https://mtc.com.my/MIACES/DSC_0281.JPG)

2. YB Datuk Hajah Zuraida Kamarudin with MPIC, MTC and MPMA officials after the MoA signing between MTC and MPMA. The MoA was signed by MTC CEO Mr. Muhtar Suhaili (third from left) and MPMA Chairman Datuk Wira Sheikh Othman Rahman (fourth from right): [https://mtc.com.my/MIACES/DSC\\_0291.JPG](https://mtc.com.my/MIACES/DSC_0291.JPG)

### **About the Malaysian Timber Council**

The Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) was established in January 1992 to promote the development and growth of the Malaysian timber industry globally. MTC’s main objectives are to promote the Malaysian timber trade and develop the market for timber products globally, to promote the development of the industry by upgrading the industry’s manufacturing technology base, to augment the supply of raw materials, to provide information services and to protect and improve the Malaysian timber industry’s global image. Further information on the Council’s activities can be obtained from [www.mtc.com.my](http://www.mtc.com.my).

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