

Oil palm wood the next step for furniture makers

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KUALA LUMPUR: Oil palm trunks are being recycled to make furniture.

Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui said furniture makers can resort to this raw material to replace timber in view of the declining tropical forest.

"Oil palm trunks can, at least, overcome the shortage of timber in the furniture industry," he told a press conference yesterday after launching the Export Furniture Exhibition (EFE).

Chin said oil palms which were no longer producing fruit were chopped off and replaced every 20 to 25 years.

Currently, 80% of the furniture manufactured in the country is made of rubberwood.

"I hope to see more furniture made out of

oil palm trunks," he added.

William Wong, who processes palm wood, said oil palm wood furniture received good response in overseas markets, especially Germany and Japan.

Currently, there are only six companies making palm wood furniture with less than 1% of it manufactured in Malaysia.

"I hope the figure reaches 30% in five years," he said.

Wong said his partner Ho Tat Sum had spent over 10 years researching palm wood.

The product was only commercialised three years ago, he added.

He said the price of palm wood furniture was slightly higher but was still affordable.

EFE, held at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park in Serdang, has attracted some 250 exhibitors from Malaysia and international companies.

It ends on Sunday.