



MALAYSIAN TIMBER CERTIFICATION COUNCIL

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9 February 2007

The Editor,
The Star,
Menara Star,
15 Jalan 16/11,
46350 Petaling Jaya.

Dear Sir,

Although it is not my intention to engage in a debate through your newspaper, I will be grateful if you could allow me to give a short response to the letter from the Centre for Orang Asli Concerns (Star Two, 6 February) on your earlier article on *Disputed papers*.

MTCC would like to point out that the management of the tropical forests of Malaysia is far more complex and difficult compared to boreal and temperate forests. This explains why up till now, less than 10% of the total certified forests in the world are tropical forests. In view of this, MTCC decided to implement its certification scheme using a phased or stepwise approach.

The MTCC-certified forest is subjected to surveillance visits every year to ensure that they continue to comply with the requirements of the certification standard. Such surveillance visits are conducted by independent assessor companies. In between these visits, MTCC obtains feedback by monitoring media reports, complaints raised by affected parties, etc, which may be related to the certified forest. We therefore urge Dr. Nicholas to provide information on the exact location within the certified forest where he alleges were not in compliance with the standard, to facilitate investigations during the next surveillance visit to the forest concerned and for appropriate corrective actions to be taken, where appropriate. In making this request, MTCC would like to clarify once again that the scheme only certifies the Permanent Reserved Forest (PRF) or *Hutan Simpanan Kekal (HSK)* in Malaysia, not forest areas which are meant to be converted for other uses.

With regard to the MTCC-Hamburg project, Dr, Nicholas would have obtained a better understanding of the project had he responded to our invitation to attend the Inception Workshop that was held on 9 January 2007. MTCC nevertheless sincerely hopes that he will participate in future activities of the project so that he could be kept informed of the latest developments.

With regard to the participation of the various stakeholder groups in the consultations connected with the MTCC scheme, we have previously provided detailed information on this, which can be found in the FAQ section of our web site at <http://www.mtcc.com.my>. Unfortunately Dr. Nicholas continues to belittle the many stakeholder groups, including social and environmental NGOs, who had participated and contributed to the standard development process. It must be highlighted that the door was always kept open to JOANGO Hutan to rejoin the multi-stakeholder consultation process, despite their withdrawal.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Chew Lye Teng
Chief Executive Officer

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