



## MALAYSIAN TIMBER CERTIFICATION COUNCIL



### Contact Person:

Lodewijk Kuiper  
Lodewijk@ssdv.nl  
T: 070 – 392 01 00 /  
M: 06-40 38 93 58

**For Immediate Release**

### Press Release

The Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) expresses its disappointment that with the release of the Certification Assessment Tool (WWF CAT), WWF appears to continue to cater to its own business interests by promoting the FSC, the certification system that it itself founded, rather than responding to the wider societal interests of promoting sustainable forest management.

MTCC manages the Malaysian Timber Certification System (MTCS), a set of standards for sustainable forest management in Malaysia. The MTCS was developed with the support and participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including WWF Malaysia, and it is recognized by private and public procurement policies globally. In the Netherlands, the State Secretary accepts MTCS for the Dutch Procurement policy aiming to procure 100% sustainable timber.

The WWF CAT criteria are solely derived from the WWF mission and objectives, causing significant concerns from the onset about its impartiality even from stakeholders close to WWF. The Dutch retailer Ahold, a WWF partner and major purchaser of FSC certified material, highlighted even before any assessment was undertaken that the WWF CAT can only lead to one outcome: that “WWF ‘gold’ standards are only recommended (FSC, MSC, ASC, etc.) and little/no room for other initiatives”. Given this set-up, MTCC felt unable to contribute to the assessment, specifically as it singled out Malaysia as the only country for which the WWF CAT was applied at national level.

This is specifically relevant in the context of the Netherlands, a country where WWF has a long history of promoting WWF-founded FSC and discrediting independent certification systems. The Netherlands are of significant importance to WWF not only because of its role in tropical timber trade, but also because WWF receives substantial funding through the Dutch government funded IDH - Sustainable Trade Initiative.

MTCC views the WWF CAT as a part of a series of measures by WWF to promote certification systems it founded itself and to discredit independent certification systems, disrupting market acceptance of non WWF certification systems. For example, WWF has been the driving force behind the initiative to influence the Dutch municipalities, provinces and water boards to use only wood products from WWF-founded FSC. WWF Netherlands went as far as taking legal proceedings to prevent the acceptance of the MTCS in the Netherlands with the vast majority of the claims being judged to be unfounded. Yet another example is in the current preparation of sustainability criteria for solid biomass, where WWF, together with local environmental NGOs, are aiming to achieve a 'FSC-only' policy. These activities go beyond the forest sector. A 2013 WWF report, based on the CAT methodology, put the five WWF-founded certification systems at the top of the list. Similar, a WWF report about fishery certification claimed that WWF-founded Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was 'better' than independent certification systems.

“There is no ‘one-size fits all’ solution to global sustainability issues, especially on matters that are as complex and delicate relating to land and forest management, against the need for socio-economic development”, commented Yong Teng Koon, CEO of MTCC. “While it may appear natural to business, even an environmental NGO such as WWF, to promote its own products, the issue at stake is too important to be sacrificed for business interest. The priority must be to work together in all possible ways to expand the area of tropical forests to be sustainably managed and certified. It is in this direction that resources and energy must be channeled.”

MTCC urges the Dutch government and all stakeholders to support every effort towards promoting sustainable forest management especially in the tropics.

*‘End of Press Release’*