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“EU SWITCH-Asia Programme to Host the EU-Asia Biomass Best Practices & Business Partnering Conference 2012 at Kuala Lumpur – May 2012”

KUALA LUMPUR - On Friday, 9 December 2011, the **EU-Malaysia Biomass Sustainable Production Initiative (Biomass-SP)**, a development cooperation project funded by the **European Union (EU)** under its **SWITCH-Asia** programme, jointly promoted by the **Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT)**, the **Association of Environmental Consultants and Companies of Malaysia (AECCOM)**, the **European Biomass Industry Association (EUBIA)**, and **Danish Technological Institute (DTI)**, officially launched its **EU-Asia Biomass Best Practices & Business Partnering Conference 2012**.

H.E Vincent Piket, *the Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Malaysia*, graced the launching ceremony held in Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

According to the *Biomass-SP Chairman, Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Ahmad Zaharudin Idrus*, the Biomass-SP project which was initiated in early 2010 has already entered its third year in 2012. Its inception in 2010 saw a lot of effort in creating awareness among the public especially the stakeholders involved. Among others, a series of Awareness Road Show Seminars were conducted in seven states in Malaysia, reaching out to more than 1000 biomass stakeholders comprising of local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), industry groups, government agencies, and research institutions and universities.

In 2011, Biomass-SP kick-started the EU-Malaysia Biomass Entrepreneurs Nurturing Programme, also known as EUM-BENP. Under this initiative, 45 Malaysian biomass SMEs have been selected to participate in the aim of improving environmental and business performance via coaching and training services. The selected SMEs are active in the production of biocomposite, biofertiliser, biopellets, biocharcoal, biobriquette, biomass fibre, eco-product, biochemical, animal feed and green building material as well as development of biomass and biogas power plants, and greenhouse gas emission reduction projects through Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) or Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS).

Throughout its lifespan, Biomass-SP has received numerous feedbacks from European companies through direct interaction with potential EU investors, traders, and technology providers. Among trade enquiries received are:

- Italian buyers looking for bio-composite products made from rice husks,
- Dutch and Italian buyers searching for palm biomass pellets and wood pellets,
- EU investors interested to invest in wood pellet production plants,
- Direct investments from Irish and French companies in biomass power plant, methane capture biogas projects, and carbon financing deals,
- Polish companies interested to buy palm kernel shells (PKS),
- Dutch buyers in search for biomass briquettes,
- EU carbon credit compliance buyer interested to buy carbon credits,
- Torrefaction technology provider for wood pellets from Netherlands seeking collaboration in Malaysia, and
- Growing interest and enquiries on the potential of palm-based biochemicals.

Recognising the above perspectives, Biomass-SP is launching its **EU-Asia Biomass Best Practices and Business Partnering Conference 2012**, to be held from **7 to 10 of May 2012** at the **Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**. The Conference consists of Pre-Conference Seminars, International Conference, Business Match-Making and Exhibitions. This event will assist participating organisations to promote long-term business or environmental collaboration on biomass development projects via trade and investment, joint venture, environmental technology transfer and cooperation, sharing of best practices and know-how within the key priority sectors of biomass industry especially those involved in bioenergy, biofertilisers, high value chemicals, eco-products and green building materials.

The Conference comprises of 3 major tracks involving 80 subjects and invited speakers. The areas of focus include:

- **Biomass as energy** includes conversion of biomass feedstock into solid biofuel (pellets, briquettes), biomass power plant projects (direct combustion, methane capture/biogas, and gasification), liquid biofuel such as diesel and ethanol.
- **Biomass as high value chemicals** applies to the development of valuable chemical precursors such as sugar alcohols, catalysts and lactic acid as well as valuable co-products for animal and aqua feed such as maltodextrin, etc.
- **Biomass as eco-products** refers to utilization of biomass feedstock in materials such as pulp and paper, biofertiliser, biocomposite and bioplastics as sustainable substitution for fossil-based materials.

The participation fees for the Conference are very affordable to ensure optimum multiplying effects can be achieved via maximum participation of biomass stakeholders locally, regionally and internationally. 400 – 500 participants are expected to attend this premier international conference. The launching itself saw participation from more than 300 biomass stakeholders.

The Biomass-SP Project is contributing towards the Malaysian Government's continuous effort to encourage more uptake on high economic value projects utilising green technology and renewable resources, as well as playing an active role in global climate change mitigation efforts.

Malaysia, having the abundance of biomass resources will give the biomass industry an upper hand in being the new renewable resources of energy and high value products.

The EU-Asia Biomass Best Practices & Business Partnering Conference 2012 is supported by **Netherland Council for Trade Promotion, Enterprise Ireland, Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB), Malaysian Timber Council (MTC), EU-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EUMCCI), Italian Trade Commission, Malaysian French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MFCCI), Malaysian Irish Business Network (MIBN), Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), Malaysian Spanish Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Embassy of Spain.**

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