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Association criticises timber council

FURNITURE manufacturers and carpenters in Kelantan have accused the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) of ignoring its primary objectives.

The Kelantan Malay Furniture Manufacturers and Carpenters' Association, in a letter to the council, criticised the MTC for being more inclined towards expanding its office space and establishing new offices overseas.

Association chairman Mohd Nor Ibrahim, who signed the letter, said the MTC "has forgotten to give due attention to plantation projects which will bring numerous benefits to our future generations and environment."

A copy of the letter was said to have been despatched to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. A faxed copy was sent to Business Times yesterday.

Mohd Nor claimed that MTC, which collects RM1.6m every month from timber levy in Kelantan, has failed to justify the way the money has been spent. The association and representatives from the MTC had a meeting last month to discuss the association members' dissatisfaction.

The letter questioned the rationale behind MTC's purchase of a new building in Kuala Lumpur and an office in London, "considering that there are other important matters that need to be looked into".

Mohd Nor said the association wants the council to return to the objectives behind its establishment, which include ensuring adequate supply of timber for downstream activities; assisting reforestation programmes; and, countering anti-tropical timber campaigns.

An MTC official contacted yesterday told Business Times the contents of the association's letter have been made known to the Primary Industries Ministry.

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