

**Limit legal logging too, says Mahathir**  
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants legal logging to be limited and concessions for this controlled.

"We are reading a lot about illegal logging and illegal workers. It is right that illegal logging should be stopped and illegal workers arrested and deported.

"But what about legal logging? They may be legal but they are also destroying even more of our shrinking forests," he added in a blog post today.

Mahathir said just because permits are issued, it does not mean that the logging is not destructive of the forests.

"It may mean a lot of money for the recipients of the permits, but the need for timber from the forest can be replaced with other kinds of timber. We have huge areas planted with rubber and palm trees. We need to cut down these trees every 25 years.

"Here is a good source of timber. We really do not need timber for housing, especially for formwork. Steel plates can be used again and again. They last longer.

"For furniture use only rubber wood. Palm tree trunks can be made suitable for chipboards and planks. On the other hand, bamboo can be grown on a large scale and be processed into paper, flooring and even cladding for walls. Even coconut shells can be used," he added.

Pointing out that revenue from timber and forest-products go to state governments, Mahathir conceded that some poor states will suffer if not allowed to give concessions for logging.

He suggested that the federal government compensate state governments if they reduce or stop giving forest concessions.

"For this compensation, the federal government should be given a say in issuing logging permits.

"Sacrifice by the states by making land available for industries and other business activities has increased federal income and corporate taxes.

"Some kind of basis must be found so that the poor states receive a bigger allocation from the federal government," he added.

When the states are less dependent on giving logging concessions, Mahathir said, they will

be more willing to reduce and even stop logging concessions.

“If we are serious about preserving our forests, there are many things we can do. It is the will that we need. Will the governments have the will?” he asked.

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