

Malaysia, Netherlands may set up joint panel

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THE HAGUE: Malaysia may set up a joint technical committee with the Netherlands later this year to address the criteria for sustainable production.

"The committee will work out the carbon dioxide emission level, which many feel can be burdensome until they know the value of emissions on oil palm plantations," Plantation, Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui told the Business Times here yesterday.

Chin, who had earlier met Dutch Environment and Spatial Planning Minister Jacqueline Cramer, said the committee will comprise officials from the ministries of both countries and the

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), of which several Malaysian plantation companies are founding members.

The Cramer Report, drawn up early this year, proposed that products imported through the Netherlands must be sustainable and meet several criteria ranging from biodiversity, food security to carbon dioxide emission levels.

The report, which is expected to be finalised in four years, looks to countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Mozambique to test the efficacy of the criteria and policy.

"This (reform) introduces a new dimension to a producing country like Malaysia and its plantations and smallholdings, and makes us aware of how countries like the Nether-

lands can lead the opinion of the other European Union nations," Chin said.

The Malaysian delegation includes Datuk Sabri Ahmad, chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of Golden Hope Plantations and the Malaysian Palm Oil Board chairman; Malaysian Palm Oil Council chairman Datuk Seri Lee Oi Hian; and Malaysian Palm Oil Association CEO Datuk Mamat Salleh.

Two Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club members Datuk Richard Riot anak Jaem and Datuk Abu Bakar Taib are also in the week-long mission to The Hague, Brussels and London.

The delegation also attended a separate dialogue with several Dutch MPs who were keen to hear the Malaysian story.