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## Malaysia: the sad role of the academic sector

A joint-venture between the KTS group and Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corp (STIDC) was announced to establish over 260,000 hectares of tree plantations in Bintulu and Baram areas. The project will involve the development of plantations on 15, 25 and 35-year cycle. The KTS group has expertise in tree plantations, as it has a 57,000 hectares project in Sabah, and also in agricultural plantations of cacao during the decade of 1970. The University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) will take part in the project by developing a geographical information system (GIS) for the management of pulp and oil palm plantations. KTS will give lectures to Unimas GIS students on practical application of this technique in plantations and arrange practical field visits to designated project areas for them.

This is another good (bad) example of how part of the academic sector -in this case the University Malaysia Sarawak- gladly plays "the sad role of hired 'experts' who justify 'scientifically' whatever needs to be justified to favour the interests of large forestry corporations" (see WRM bulletin 25). Instead of offering their academic and technical knowledge to their own peoples' struggle to defend their environment and livelihoods, this institution directly supports those who destroy them. Logic and justice upside down.

Source: "Joint venture to set up tree plantations" by Jack Wong, The Star, 3/8/99, received from Pro Regenwald, e-mail: prmunic@amazonas.comlink.apc.org Comments by WRM International Secretariat.