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## Labour Constrains and Potential Solutions\*

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*Labour, the most important element in plantation industry is becoming scarce and expensive. It is unfortunate that this labour intensive industry continue to be the least preferred choice among job seekers. The industry therefore has to accept the fact that reliance on foreign workers, especially the Indonesians will be a permanent feature.*

*Labour is a must for plantation to be efficient and competitive. Management and systems of work has to be innovative. Key solutions to sustainability is to be productive. All efforts must be geared up towards improving land and peoples productivity. Mechanisation gives a lot of hope to further improve productivity and hence labour to land ratio. Introduction of machine has proven to improve productivity by 30 per cent to 75 per cent in some area off field operation.*

*Indonesia will continue to be a preferred and main source of workers. Despite all the speculations, there are still a lot of job seekers especially from Sulawesi; but competition is stiff and will continue to exist. Plantation companies who wish to recruit new workers and retain them have to make sure strategies on workers welfare is in place. Expectation among potential workers, local administrative system and statutory requirements can never be taken for granted. Direct engagement with all parties concerned at the source is very crucial during recruitment.*

*Immigration Department and other agencies have a role to play. Various subjects need to be resolved at government to government level (of the province). Presence of Malaysian Governments representative as a coordinator shall be very helpful.*

*Certain policies on foreign workers have to be resolved among stakeholders with the spirit of maintaining significance of the industrys contribution to the countrys economy.*

*Keywords: Plantation labour, constrains, sources of labour, statutory requirements, approaches, solutions.*

