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Salleh-Kenaf

MULTIPURPOSE "KENAF" PLANT MAY BE INTRODUCED IN SABAH

KOTA KINABALU, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- "Kenaf", a so-called wonder plant, will be grown in Sabah on a large scale if a proposal by Yayasan Bumiputera Sabah (YBS) is implemented.

YBS chairman Datuk Salleh Tun Said said its cultivation could provide opportunities for investors and boost the income and participation of Bumiputeras in the agro-industry.

"I have already had some discussions with parties who were keen to promote large-scale plantation of Kenaf in Sabah," he said when launching a franchise programme under YBS here today.

Kenaf is a plant originating from South Africa and according to researches done by Japanese scientists, it can be used in a variety of ways, including in the manufacturing of paper, textile and human food.

Salleh, a former Sabah Chief Minister, said Kenaf was among the crops mentioned by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as those that could be introduced in the country to aggressively promote the agricultural sector.

Salleh said given Sabah's expanse of fertile land it could be turned into a hub for the development of the agro-industry in the country and region.

"YBS is in the process of identifying suitable land for large-scale Kenaf plantation projects. Once identified, I will bring this matter up with the state government for consideration," he said.

He said for a start the Kota Belud district office had been asked to find suitable land for a Kenaf-based agro-industry.

The franchise programme involves the acquisition of 60 percent equity of Acacia Management Services Sdn Bhd by Permodalan Bumiputera Sabah Bhd (PBSB), the investment arm of YBS.

Acacia Management is the franchise holder of Snappers, an established Australian-style seafood-based fast food chain.

With the acquisition, the company has obtained Snappers franchising rights for operation in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and West Asia.

According to a statement from Acacia Management, the company has two wholly owned Snappers outlets at the Centre Point Food Court and Damai Point here, with two more to be built around the Kota Kinabalu area.

More outlets would be set up in major towns like Kota Belud, Tuaran, Papar and Beaufort, it said.

Snappers also has outlets in Bangsar and at KLCC Suria in Kuala Lumpur, and Melaka's Mahkota Parade.

The company said it has identified a few locations for a flagship outlet in Jalan Sultan Ismail and outlets in Putrajaya and Kotaraya complex.

It is inviting local Bumiputeras to participate in the company's built and transfer franchising concept under which entrepreneurs will be assisted in the establishment of Snappers outlets.

-- BERNAMA

JS YBY