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SERTING-TRADING

SERTING'S MALAYSIA TRADING HOUSE IN S.AFRICA ENHANCES MSIAN EXPORTS

By: Nor Faridah Abdul Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 (Bernama) -- The Serting Group, which has successfully established the Malaysian Trading House (MTH), the first in South Africa to house quality made-in Malaysia products, is all set to penetrate countries in Northern Africa by emulating the establishment of similar trading houses.

Yaacob Arshad, Serting's chairman said the South African trading house, located in Cape Town, has received overwhelming response not only from dealers and agents in South Africa but also from countries like Mozambique, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

As such, the group aims to set up similar trading houses in these countries in 1999 to enhance the market for Malaysian exports, he told Bernama TV in an exclusive interview today.

Yaacob said MTH, which set up base in South Africa August last year, is focused on introducing and marketing Malaysian products in that country, and in November last year managed to reap sales worth RM1.1 million.

He added that the idea to set up the trading house was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who felt that the Malaysian private sector should complement the government's effort in promoting products overseas.

"With the presence of such a trading house, agents and dealers could flock there to discuss business deals and place orders without having to come to Malaysia," he added.

In other words, the MTH is there to facilitate the transformation of reputable Malaysian corporations as a competitive force on the global arena and is a testament to the nation's progress, he said, adding that Malaysian products enjoy very high ratings in South Africa.

Yaacob explained that the group, backed by its abundant experience in conducting business in South Africa is optimistic that the MTH concept will succeed.

He pointed out that the group had commenced business in the property industry of South Africa way back in 1994 and now owns a hotel - the Lady Hamilton Hotel - in Cape Town.

Yaacob also said that when the MTH was first set up, only large orders were accepted for Malaysian-made products like motorcycles manufactured by Modenas (a member of the DRB-Hicom Group of Companies), household appliances produced by Malaysian Electric Corporation (MEC), foodstuffs and furniture, but of late MTH has also begun conducting retail trade.

He said the market for Malaysian-made products were huge in South Africa and even expressed surprise at the fact that enquiries were received by the MTH for items such as sardine and paper.

Yaacob added that small and medium scale industries (SMIs) could also display their products at the MTH.

"Discussions will be held soon with SMIs on the possibility of them having their products promoted in South Africa," he also said.

To-date, some 35 companies are displaying their products in the nine-storey Trading House located right in the middle of the picturesque Cape Town.

Yaacob said companies or manufacturers who are interested to display their products could contact the Serting Group at Serting House, 61, Jalan Maarof, Bangsar, 59000 Kuala Lumpur or Tel: 282 8888, fax: 282 9999.

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