

ABB makes Malaysia its regional business centre

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WORLDWIDE technology group Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) has made Malaysia its regional centre for its medium-voltage products, automation and service segments of its business, said ABB Holdings Sdn Bhd chief executive officer and country manager Dr Roland Muench.

These segments represent a significant part of ABB's business. Some 60 per cent of its volume amounting to US\$30 billion (US\$1 = RM3.80) is from these three segments, he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He was speaking after a RM100,000 cheque presentation ceremony for the sponsorship of the Asean Business Summit 2000 which will be held on April 11 and 12 in Kuala Lumpur.

ABB has customers in power transmission and distribution; automation, oil and gas, and petrochemicals; industrial products and contracting; and in financial services.

He said Zurich-based ABB decided to strengthen its operations in Malaysia as in the past few years, ABB has moved away from its traditional business and

its direction is towards high technology, automation and service to strengthen the knowledge-based business.

"And this approach fits well with Malaysia going into information technology and knowledge-based business," he said

"ABB will develop the Malaysian organisation as a regional centre for several products and services. Ex-

port allocations for several products and services have been given to ABB Malaysia," he said.

He pointed out that the most significant is in medium voltage equipment where in the future the products manufactured in Malaysia will be used in Australia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines,

Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

"This should result in a doubling of the volume of today's RM100 million within three years," he said.

In addition, several regional management centres for different business areas have been built. These centres will be responsible for the business in South-East Asia.

On the company's performance, he said the company expects a sales volume of RM500 million this year for the areas of power transmission and distribution, automation and industries.

"In two years, we expect it to hit RM1 billion," he said.

Meanwhile, Datuk Paul Low, the chairman of the organising committee for the Asean Business Summit 2000, said the summit themed "Asia 2000 — Moving Forward" is expected to attract participation of between 500 and 600 delegates.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to deliver the opening keynote address followed by a dialogue session with the delegates.

The summit is aimed at providing a platform for businessmen to discuss strategies, current developments and collective initiatives that Asean and Asia need to implement to face the challenges in the 21st century.

The summit is organised by the Asean Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia.