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SARAWAK-INDUSTRIES

LOCAL INDUSTRIES MUST "GLOBALISE" OPERATIONS

KUCHING, April 10 (Bernama) -- Local industries must gear up their operations to meet the challenges of trade liberalisation and globalisation in line with the state's industrial development plans, the Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister, Tan Sri Dr George Chan said today.

Chan, who is also the state Industrial Development Minister, said that to sustain the economy of Sarawak, the industries needed to be aggressive in acquiring the latest technology to ensure that they can be highly efficient and productive in their operations.

"Knowledge workers provide the foundation for the knowledge economy (k-economy). You must therefore be prepared to invest more on the development of your human resources through the continuous training and upgrading of management skills," he said when officiating at the presentation of an MS ISO 9002 certificate to Neste Chemicals Sdn Bhd here on Monday.

The ceremony marked the first time that such an award had been granted to a Sarawak-based adhesive resins manufacturer.

Chan said the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) unveiled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently had, among other things, would gear the country towards the development of knowledge-based industries to enable Malaysian-made products to remain competitive.

On the establishment of timber-related industries, Chan said the Sarawak government encouraged its growth "to ensure that the core industries could have the services from such supporting industries".

This in turn would help the state achieve a higher degree of industrial resilience and growth to sustain its long term economic and industrial development, he said.

Chan said that, as such, the shareholders of Hexza-Neste had found it opportune to invest in the manufacturing of adhesive resins to supplement and complement the work of local wood panel manufacturers.

The company is a tri-partite joint venture between Hexza Corporation Berhad, Neste Oy and Yayasan Sarawak.

Earlier group chairman Dr Foong Weng Sum said the plant, at present, had a formalin capacity of 88,000 metric tonnes per annum which could easily support 130,000 metric tonnes of resin production following its expansion in 1999.

From a zero market share, Hexza-Neste, today was servicing about 30 percent of the adhesive resins market in Sarawak with customers varying from big timber conglomerates to small operators, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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