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SABAH-KADZANDUSUN

KCCI TO UNVEIL MASTERPLAN TO HELP KADAZANDUSUN IN BUSINESS

By: Newmond Tibin

KOTA KINABALU, June 10 (Bernama) -- The Sabah Kadazandusun Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) will unveil a masterplan to encourage more non-Muslim Bumiputeras, especially among the Kadazandusun Murut (KDM) community, to venture into Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Its president, Datuk Ajit Galun, said the proposed masterplan, which centred on the availability of Micro Credit Scheme offering loans of RM20,000 and below from Bank Pertanian Malaysia (BPM) and Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN), would be tabled at the chamber's next supreme council meeting this month.

"We will discuss the masterplan in detail before implementing it. Our focus will certainly be on business opportunities in the agriculture and tourism sectors such as the typical KDM food and traditional dress (kain Marudu).

"KCCI is serious in helping the KDM community to succeed in business ventures. That's why KCCI will come up with a masterplan," he told Bernama here today.

Ajit said the KDM should grab the opportunity offered through the Micro Credit Scheme as it would assist them financially to start their business, more so that applications for such loans could be processed within a week.

"This is a good opportunity for the KDM community to start their own business, albeit on a small scale initially," he said.

On May 21, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced new measures to stimulate the nation's economy and one of them was to streamline and strengthen the micro credit programme.

It included the restructuring of BPM to become a micro credit bank to manage loans for small businesses and enterprises in the agriculture sector with a sum of RM500 million being provided under the Micro Credit Scheme.

Apart from that, it provided an additional fund of RM200 million to Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) and placing AIM under the credit scheme of BPM besides a new fund of RM300 million under the scheme for BSN to finance non-agriculture projects.

On the future of the agriculture sector in Sabah, Ajit said: "There is a huge potential provided they (KDM community) are ready to develop it on a commercial basis.

"As far as I can see, there is a huge potential in farming especially pineapples, tapioca and durians but the problem is marketing. The government could help out here."

He said that there should be more promotion for "Tenom coffee" as greater awareness would then enhance its marketability and providing business opportunities to the KDM community.

On local KDM food, Ajit said: "There is a good market as it is unique. But there is no restaurant serving these dishes although they are quite popular among the tourists during the Harvest Festival. This is one area that must be tapped."

In this respect, he urged the KDM community, including fresh graduates, to start their own business on a small scale initially.

Ajit said since the setting up of KCCI about eight years ago, it had grown and now has about 500 members with several of them achieving corporate status.

He said in line with KCCI's main objective -- to unite businessmen and KDM professionals for the good of the community -- KCCI would continue to

help source for business opportunities be it in government or private  
sectors. -- BERNAMA  
NT TJK