

MoU augurs well for state's devt

Signing of agreement to provide for joint researches for better utilisation of water and power resources

By Lim How Pim

KOTA SAMARAHAN: The industrial capability at Sama Jaya Free Industrial Zone is set for enhancement following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Sanmina-SCI Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) yesterday.

The MoU which provides for carrying out joint researches for better utilisation of water and power resources is also seen as a positive factor in the development of the state's human capital.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan who witnessed the signing ceremony said: "Sarawak in general, has achieved remarkable growth and success in spite of the uncertain and unpredictable global economy. The electrical and electronic (E&E) sector has contributed much to the state's economy.

"The contribution of manufacturing sector to the state's gross domestic product (GDP) is 24.9 per cent in 2007 and is forecast to stay that way in 2008," he said, adding that the MoU looked to have the capacity to ensure that the sector remain important in Malaysia's economy with a contribution of about 30.2 per cent of the national GDP.

He said this before witnessing the signing of documents between SSCI managing director Mark Gable and director of engineering Bill Nicolai, and Unimas' vice-chancellor Prof Dr Khairuddin Abdul Hamid and deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Innovation) Prof Dr Murtedza Mohamed.

Dr Chan, who is also Minister of Industrial Development and Modernisation of Agriculture, said the MoU signing marked another impressive chapter in the development of E&E industry in the state.

"It signifies that Sarawak has the means and resources in facilitating and sustaining cutting edge manufacturing activities in Sarawak." He stressed that companies operating in Sarawak were assured of the state government's support, be it political and economic stability, relatively cheaper industrial land, reliable utilities, educated workforce and better quality of life.

Noting that SSCI was increasing its production in higher value-added products in Sarawak, he said this would be beneficial to local employees who would be exposed and trained as the newest cutting edge technology users.

"Sanmina-SCI has grown by leaps and bounds, into one of the major manufacturing plants at Sama Jaya with a capital investment of more than RM145 million, and employing more than 1,400 workers. It is fully involved in producing multi-layer circuit boards that involves more than 50 processes comprising electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical and quality-testing processes," he said, adding that SSCI exported RM304.5 million worth of printed circuit boards last year.

Following the global competitiveness in research and development (R&D), Dr Chan urged industrialists, especially the local ones to take up the initiative to invest in the industry in order to meet worldwide challenges.



PARTNERS NOW: Gable (right) exchanges signed documents with Khairuddin, witnessed by Dr Chan (centre), Murtedza (left) and Nicolai.

He pointed out that the federal government had placed huge sum of money in R&D through various government agencies and institutions of higher learning such as Unimas.

"These agencies are well equipped with sophisticated equipment and are capable of training and enhancing the capability of our human resources in addition to commercialising their research findings."

He added that the local industrialists should tap into these resources and maximise the facilities provided by the government.

Sarawak had the resources to fuel the growth of the manufacturing industry and the government would continue facilitating the industrialists by providing favourable conditions for investments, he said.

While commending the efforts of SSCI and Unimas in helping expedite the transfer of technology to the local workforce, he hoped that other industries would emulate such fine initiative to develop the state's industrial sector.

Khairuddin meanwhile said that Unimas, under the MoU, was committed to providing the expertise in waste water and environmental management.

"It will also make available the analytical equipment and analytical services needed by Sanmina-SCI staff," he said, adding that the MoU would offer opportunity for staff exchange, student internship or industrial training and organising joint conference on topics of common interest.

Khairuddin added that the agreed memorandum would be a first step to achieve a win-win partnership with SSCI in creating and applying knowledge to address the challenges of the 21st century.

"We look with anticipation to extending our collaboration into a broad range of other areas in future, especially those related to the needs of Sarawak Corridor on Renewable Energy (SCORE)." Gable said SSCI, set up here in 1996, had locals for half of its workforce. He expressed confidence that with the MoU, the company would better meet the demands of customers who came in all sizes and from various geographical locations.

He was pleased to announce that the corporation had, under the MoU, come up with a special scholarship programme of RM10,000 worth of Master course each for two top students in Unimas.