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MS ISO 9001:2008 REG. NO.AR3553

SIARAN MEDIA

[MEDIA RELEASE/STATEMENT]

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30 March 2015

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS WITH YAYASAN SABAH GROUP

Kota Kinabalu (Monday): Over the past 20 years, the astounding leadership of Datuk Seri Panglima Musa Haji Aman, Chief Minister of Sabah cum Chairman of the Yayasan Sabah Board of Trustees has mobilised Yayasan Sabah Group to greater heights in building transformation for the people and the State, said the Director of Yayasan Sabah, Datuk Sapawi Bin Haji Ahmad in his speech during a ceremony held at Grand Ballroom, Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa, celebrating the Chief Minister's 20 Years with Yayasan Sabah Group and launching of *Pelan Strategik Transformasi Kumpulan Yayasan Sabah (2013 – 2023)*.

“When Datuk Seri Musa was first appointed as the Director of Yayasan Sabah in 1995, he made a promise to manage Yayasan Sabah Group to his best ability and will be committed in pushing the organisation to be at its best. Now, 20 years later, we can see that he is a man of his words as Yayasan Sabah Group continues to grow,” added Datuk Sapawi.

In 2003, Datuk Seri Musa was appointed as the Chairman of the Yayasan Sabah Board of Trustees and his focus towards education were still ever intact. Kolej Yayasan Sabah, which focuses more on technical courses, is now widening its field of studies and giving more opportunities for the youths of Sabah to further their studies there. Besides this, Yayasan Sabah Group has also established its very own University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF) that further widen the organisation's role in education development in Sabah.

Agro-plantation, tourism and hospitality besides education, are the core businesses of Yayasan Sabah Group. However, over the years, the organisation has also invested in business industries such as oil and gas, biotechnology and horticulture and fisheries and food industries. The Group has also invested to contribute to high-end tourism through Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE). “Following the success of International CEOs Conference (2005 & 2008), International Women Executive Congress 2007 and Blue Ocean Strategy Conference 2009, Datuk Seri Musa spearheaded the initiative for Yayasan Sabah Group to develop Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC). With the development of SICC, Sabah will be the hub of smart partnership, brainstorming and is anticipated to indirectly provide 10,000 job opportunities,” said Datuk Sapawi.

Even though Yayasan Sabah Group is actively moving forward, the organisation is doubling its conservation efforts in Danum Valley, Maliau Basin and Imbak Canyon through collaborations with local and international organisations such as PETRONAS, Akademi Sains Malaysia, Shell (Malaysia), The Royal Society (United Kingdom), Nature, Ecology and People Consult (NEPCon), Face-the-Future (Netherlands), IKEA (Sweden) and DANCED/DANIDA (Denmark). Through these collaborations, around 450 research projects have been done and 378 individuals have succeeded in completing their Ph.D and Masters with their research studies conducted in Danum Valley and Maliau Basin. In addition to this, the Group is also in the midst of developing two new conservation areas which are Sungai Taliwas and Silam Coast conservation areas. Besides this, the Group is also actively working on its large scale rehabilitation projects namely, Innoprise-FACE Foundation Rainforest Rehabilitation Project (INFAPRO) as well as Innoprise-IKEA Forest Rehabilitation Project (INIKEA) that focus on regenerating highly degraded logged forest.

“With these conservation efforts, I believe that more opportunities will come for Yayasan Sabah Group to work with local and international organisations in ensuring that this natural heritage live on for generations to come,” added Datuk Sapawi.

Apart from this, Yayasan Sabah Group has created *Pelan Strategik Transformasi Kumpulan Yayasan Sabah (2013 – 2023)* in line with the *halatuju* of the Federal Government through National Blue Ocean Strategy. There are eleven initiatives under this plan, four were implemented in 2006 namely E-Library, PDCB, Yayasan Sabah Bersama Rakyat (YSBR) and Pusat Kraftangan Sabah (PKS), while seven initiatives soon to be implemented are *Tabung Pendidikan Negeri Sabah (TPNS)*, *Pusat Pembangunan Pendidikan Kanak-Kanak (3PKK)*, GRAD-SKILLS, *Program Pembangunan Masyarakat (PPM)*, *Sukarelawan Yayasan Sabah*, *Desa Budaya Rakyat* and *YS NIAGA*.

“Indeed, these efforts were made possible with the initiatives and endless support from Datuk Seri Musa. A visionary man, Datuk Seri Musa came up with the idea of establishing Pusat Kraftangan Sabah (PKS) in Keningau to enhance the handicraft industry in Sabah and boost the economy of the communities living in the rural area,” said Datuk Sapawi.

PKS is by far, Yayasan Sabah Group’s most successful projects under the Program Desa Cemerlang dan Berinovasi (PDCB), a programme that aims for rural development in a balanced and holistic approach while focusing on human capital development. As to date, Yayasan Sabah Group through its Zone offices and PKS, has trained nearly 19,000 people in handicraft making and has created young handicraft entrepreneurs. PKS has become a handicraft innovation centre and will continue its efforts in turning local handicrafts into global brands.

Yayasan Sabah Group is also venturing into talent management where efforts are taken to manage, assist and develop potential new business entrepreneurs. This begins through PKS where training on handicraft making as well as marketing are given to the handicraft entrepreneurs. These are on-going efforts of Yayasan Sabah Group in providing a platform for aspiring entrepreneurs to move forward in their business undertakings and also to help elevate the handicraft industry in Sabah.

Apart from the launching of *Pelan Strategik Transformasi Kumpulan Yayasan Sabah (2013 – 2023)*, Datuk Seri Musa’s birthday was also celebrated with guests during the ceremony.



PIX 1 : Datuk Seri Musa (right) with Datuk Sapawi (left) with the *Pelan Strategik Transformasi Kumpulan Yayasan Sabah (2013 – 2023)* book launched by Datuk Seri Musa.



PIX 2 : Cake cutting ceremony by Datuk Seri Musa (fourth, right) with distinguished guests.



PIX 3 : Datuk Sapawi (left) presenting a memento to Datuk Seri Musa (middle) witnessed by Datin Seri Panglima Hajah Faridah Haji Tussin (right).

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