

## **JCI ASEAN Senate members see opportunities in SDC**

KOTA KINABALU (Tue.) – Members of the JCI ASEAN Senate have identified several potential business opportunities in the Sabah Development Corridor (SDC). For a start, they indicated their readiness to forge closer business ties with local Sabah partners, particularly in the tourism sector. This view was expressed by many members after they attended a SDC briefing given by IDS Executive Director, Datuk Dr Mohd Yaakub Haji Johari here yesterday.

The briefing, held at the IDS Conference Room, was attended by 26 JCI ASEAN members from Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. They were led by Datuk Hj Ahmad Ali bin Lope Abdul Aziz, President of the Sabah Bumiputera Chamber of Commerce, which is hosting the JCI ASEAN Senate Board Meeting in Kota Kinabalu.

The JCI ASEAN Senate members, most of whom business leaders from their respective countries, were impressed with the economic potentials of the SDC. They felt that Sabah has strong potential in many areas including agriculture and tourism.

President of the JCI ASEAN Senate, Mr Jorge L. Banal commented that Sabah has made progressive strides in agriculture and tourism sectors. He said that he marvelled at the rapid pace of infrastructure and property development in Sabah.

Vice President of the JCI ASEAN Senate, Mr Victorio V. Soliven described the briefing on SDC as an eye opener for Philippine investors. He said because of their strategic location, both Southern Philippines and Sabah could complement each other in developing high-end tourism products such as signature resorts, spa and therapy centres and medical tourism. He said tourists from the West especially the US and Europe have come to the Philippines for medical tourism, that is, medical treatment cum vacation. “The cost is very much less than they would have to pay for treatment back home and they also get to enjoy a good vacation,” he said.

Mr. William Tay, JCI ASEAN Senate member from Singapore said his country is in need of a lot of materials such as those for building construction and food production. He said the livestock sector, for example, is a potential area where investors from Singapore would want to invest in.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohd Yaakub said development of the SDC would largely be private sector driven and as such the government would welcome potential investors including those from ASEAN countries to seize the opportunities in the Corridor. He said the state government was in the process of preparing a set of attractive incentives for investors in the SDC.

Dr Yaakub thanked the JCI ASEAN members for their visit. He assured that the State government is adopting a very business-friendly and responsive approach in its dealing with the private sector. “The government is making great efforts to create a conducive economic climate for businesses to flourish in the State,” he added.

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Members of the JCI ASEAN Senate in a group photo session with Executive Director of IDS, Datuk Dr Mohd Yaakub Haji Johari (seated front row fourth from left). On his right is President of the JCI ASEAN Senate, Mr Jorge L. Banal and next to him is Vice President of the JCI ASEAN Senate, Mr Victorio V. Soliven. Also in the photograph are (seated from right): Mr William Tay, JCI ASEAN Senate member from Singapore, Mr Julius Wong, Deputy President of the JCI ASEAN Senate and Datuk Hj Ahmad Ali bin Lope Abdul Aziz, President of the Sabah Bumiputera Chamber of Commerce.