

Headline	Develop vendors, says Sagan		
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Develop vendors, says Sagan

Sectors like oil and gas can create jobs and boost business if they adopt such programme

By **JACK WONG**

jackwong@thestar.com.my

KUCHING: Big companies in the oil and gas industry as well as ship-building sector have been urged to set up vendor development programmes.

Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Jacob Dungau Sagan said the move would benefit smaller firms and businesses and create jobs for locals.

He said Sarawak Energy Bhd, which plans to build more hydroelectric dams, could also consider introducing a vendor development programme.

“Entrepreneurship development in Sarawak should not only involve the government but also the private sector,” he said when closing a furniture industry’s entrepreneur development seminar here yesterday.

The event was jointly hosted by the ministry, Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC), Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas).

Sagan said STIDC was the only state agency which had a vendor development programme for furniture makers.

He said Malaysia exported RM5.6bil worth of furniture in the first nine months of this year as compared to RM8bil for the whole of

last year. The main export markets are Europe, United States, Africa and East Asian countries.

Sagan said the furniture industry had big potentials to expand to increase the country’s revenue.

Later, speaking to reporters, he said as Sarawak was rich in timber resources and various raw materials, the state should explore all avenues to further develop the furniture industry.

“Sarawak has many species of hardwood and softwood suitable for furniture making, which we should fully exploit.”

He said the state exported about RM20mil worth of furniture, which was merely more than 0.3% of the RM7.3bil worth of logs and timber

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products it exported annually.

Sagan said with his ministry, STIDC, FRIM and Unimas working together to provide expertise, training and other assistances, more entrepreneurs should venture into furniture making.

He was impressed by some of the unique designs of furniture created by Unimas students, which was on display at an exhibition in conjunction with the two-day seminar.

The students have also created other designs using oil palm tree and coconut trunks.

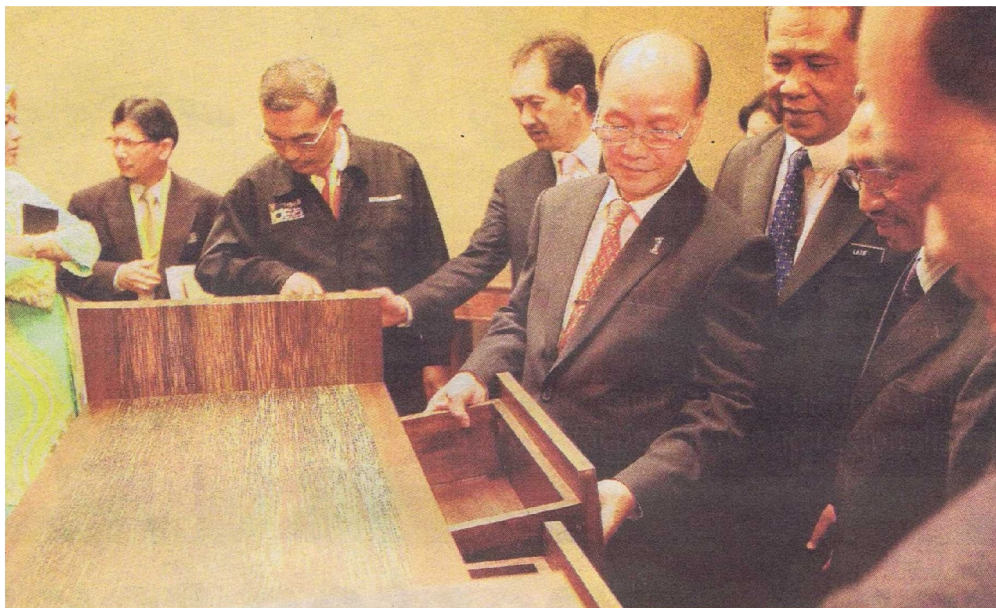
Earlier in his speech, STIDC general manager Datuk Sarudu Hoklai said it was vital to carry out research and development (R&D) activities in furniture making so as to come up with prototypes that could be commercialised.

He said to capture the global niche market, Sarawak needed to produce quality furniture.

Sarudu said as the state was targeted to increase forest plantations to one million hectares, the industry would produce big volume of timber resources for downstream industries like furniture making.

Sarawak has many species of hardwood and softwood suitable for furniture-making, which we should fully exploit.

— DATUK JACOB DUNGAU SAGAN



Good quality: Sagan looking at products at an exhibition after closing the furniture industry's entrepreneur development seminar in Kuching yesterday. — ANDRE OLIVEIRO / The Star