

Make KK BIMP-EAGA tourism hub – Masidi



Dr Harun (2nd left) presents a memento to Masidi while Dr Jeter (right) looks on

NST 10.07.2012 1

By **PAUL MU**

paul@newsabahtimes.com.my

KOTA KINABALU: Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun has proposed that Kota Kinabalu City be made BIMP-EAGA's tourism hub.

"I think Kota Kinabalu will be ideal considering the advantage we have here," said Masidi.

He said the people living in BIMP-EAGA including from the Philippines and Indonesia share many cultural similarities.

"We should seize the opportunity as our common strength is in tourism which attracts many tourists. And, we have many tourism products to be explored," Masidi told reporters after opening the BIMP-EAGA Conference 2012: Enhancing Sustainability, Competitiveness & Innovation Conference here yesterday.

"And I am confident that if all the countries agree (to make Kota Kinabalu as the hub) Sabah's tourism will have even greater potential.

"I know all BIMP-EAGA members also want their countries to be the tourism hub.

"But to me we should talk about forging cooperation in the BIMP-EAGA and we should see beyond the political boundary to make sure there is continuous economic growth in this region," he said.

Masidi also said it was high time to talk less and start working as the BIMP-EAGA had already been established for quite some time now.

"We cannot be forever talking and I hope I don't sound undiplomatic. All the relevant parties need to put aside their ego because we are also talking about the economic benefit for the future generations.

"We can no longer sit still but to embrace globalisation if we want to continue developing our economy as China and India are growing," he said.

Meanwhile, he said tourist arrivals to Sabah would further increase if Kota Kinabalu was made the tourism hub for BIMP-EAGA.

"It will put us on the world map of tourism," he said, adding that more economic opportunity will present itself when more people visit Sabah.

Masidi also stressed the need for the tourism sector to be creative and innovative and to make constant change to attract tourists.

Yesterday, the minister also witnessed the signing of a letter of intent between Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Palawan State University of the Philippines (PSU) and Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT).

UMS was represented by its vice chancellor Prof Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah while PSU and MSU-IIT by their respective presidents Dr Jeter Sespene and Dr Sukarno Tanggol.