

Headline	Sabah seeks more investors for renewable energy		
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# Sabah seeks more investors for renewable energy

By Nancy Lai

**KOTA KINABALU:** Academic and research institutions should do more rigorous and extensive research activities pertaining to renewable energy development, said Minister of Special Tasks Datuk Teo Chee Kang.

Teo, who was representing Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, pointed out that solutions can be found in community based renewable energy projects including micro hydro and solar systems which are absolutely critical in meeting power supply needs of those living in remote locations.

“In particular, I hope to see more contribution from the private sectors in developing this sector given that we have renewable resources such as biomass from our extensive oil palm sector and natural resources that can support growth of the sector.

“It is the government’s hope that Sabah will attract more investors in the renewable energy sector and become a notable destination for biomass, geothermal, micro-algae and other investments,” he stressed.

Teo said this when delivering the Chief Minister’s key note address at the seminar on the ‘Greening of Sabah: Renewable energy options for the near future’ organised by Institute for Development Studies (IDS) in partnership with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) of Germany.

He said demand for electricity in the state is expected to pick up considerably in the near future given Sabah’s on-going economic development.

He said electricity demand in the

state had increased at an annual average of about eight to 10 per cent and is expected to continue at about 7.7 per cent a year into the foreseeable future.

According to Teo, due to rapidly increasing demand, unplanned outages lead to costly service interruptions especially in the east coast which is almost wholly dependent on diesel plants at the moment.

“In rural areas, electricity grid extensions are often not economical. The recent upgrade of transmission grids linking Kota Kinabalu to Kudat and the Eastern Sabah grid has helped alleviate the transmission issue.

“The completion of the Kimanis and SPR Energy power projects next year are expected to stabilize power generation, generating 385 Megawatts and increasing the state’s total generating capacity to approximately 1,400 Megawatts,” he said.

He pointed out that in this context, the state Government is committed in embarking on aggressive strategies to promote large scale use of green energy and to support the development of the renewable energy sector.

Off-grid renewable technologies, especially from non-hydroelectric resources will be one of the pivotal solutions to provide a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to meet the state’s power demand as the state’s economy expands, he said.

Government initiatives, he stressed, need to be supported by other stakeholders as the role

of the government is to provide transparent and stable policy guidelines that facilitate investment such as sufficient infrastructure, incentives, technical and financial assistance.

“Today’s seminar is timely and will provide us with the opportunity to reassess the role and progress of the renewable energy sector in the country as a whole and in Sabah specifically from the perspective of both government and the private sector,” he said.

Teo said that according to the International Energy Agency or IEA, over 80 countries have renewable energy policies with most developed countries having

made progress in the past decade in the generation of renewable energy.

With more than half of global renewable power capacity, recent trends reflect the importance of developing countries in advancing the sector, he pointed out.

“Developing countries particularly those with high priced power are building more wind, solar and hydro-electric plants to meet the rising power demand and combat local pollution problems. A five year outlook published by the IEA states that renewable energy is fast growing and will edge out natural gas as the second biggest source of electricity after coal by 2016.

“Non-hydroelectric or renewable sources such as wind, solar, tidal and geothermal and energy derived from plants are also expected to develop swiftly and will increase their share of the global energy mix in the future,” said Teo.

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Teo receiving a memento from IDS chairman Datuk Clarence Bongkos Malakun at the seminar on the 'Greening of Sabah: Renewable energy options for the near future at Le Meridien yesterday.