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Industrial Development Minister Datuk Raymond Tan Shu Kiah (second right) accompanied by Federation of Sabah Manufacturers (FSM) President Datuk Seri Panglima Wong Khen Thau (right), shaking hands with guests who welcome him to the dinner last night.

## Invest in research and development — Musa

**KOTA KINABALU:** The manufacturing industry must be willing to invest in research and development to come up with new products that are more appealing to the consumers.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman in making the call, said manufacturers could also work closely with research institutions so that these products would meet consumers' satisfaction.

"I would like to call on the manufacturing sector to find niche markets for some of our unique products by becoming more innovative.

"By adding value to these products, and investing in packaging and understanding marketing trends, I am sure Sabah's manufacturing industry will grow," said Musa in his

speech read by Industrial Development Minister Datuk Raymond Tan during the Federation of Sabah Manufacturers (FSM) Night here yesterday.

He said the government was also doing its part to facilitate issues related to manufacturing, but those involved in the sector must also keep up with the trends and study market needs.

"Sabah has a booming agriculture industry, and we are also becoming increasingly known for aquaculture. There are a range of downstream products that we can come up with from these sectors, which can be used to position ourselves in the region," Musa said.

He however agrees that not all issues faced by the industry can be solved overnight but believes with the determination from all, especially FSM, it can be done.

"I am glad that the cabotage policy, a long standing issue on national and state significance, has been healed by the federal government with the determination shown by FSM.

"Although only partial liberalisation of shipping routes between West and East Malaysia was granted, the federal government took note of concerns voiced by FSM and other parties on the need to find a solution to this issue," he said.

Musa said FSM had been around for the last 26 years, championing causes of the manufacturing industry and worked with chambers of commerce and related associations to address issues of common concern.

He further said that under the Tenth Malaysia Plan (10MP), the state government through the State Economic Planning Unit had appointed FSM to head the Technical Working Group for Infrastructure.

"FSM, together with chambers of commerce, associations and major industry players like Kota Kinabalu Industrial Park Sdn Bhd (KKIP) and Palm Oil Industrial Cluster (POIC) Sdn Bhd have to put forward issues and challenges confronting the industry and proposed measures to improve the state's infrastructure," he said.

The requests cover the need to improve infrastructure including airports, seaports, roads, railways and bridges, apart from drainage and sewerage systems at industrial estates.

He said FSM had been highlighting various issues such as foreign workers, shipping costs, land lease extensions, human capital development and financing, among others, adding the government would consider all suggestions and feedback from the private sector before making changes to policies, as well as rules and regulations affecting the industry and the people.

Musa also urged FSM to conduct dialogues and forums as well as trainings and seminars tailored to the needs of the industry, besides promoting the state through the Sabah International Expo (SIE).

"SIE has become bigger and better in terms of participation, sales volume and number of visitors. It brings both short and long-term economic benefits to Sabah, and augurs well in turning the state into a trade and investment destination."

