

Norvatis keen to invest in Sarawak

SWISS transnational company Norvatis is keen to look into the possibility of investing in Sarawak's rich biodiversity to undertake biotechnology research on the active ingredients found in plants in its forest.

Switzerland's Ambassador to Malaysia Urs Stemmer said Norvatis, one of the 10 biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world with a big component in biochemistry, has already held talks with the relevant authorities in Kuala Lumpur.

"Malaysia is a good country to invest in as it has excellent infrastructure, business-friendly policy of the government, well-educated people and its people speak good English," he said after paying a courtesy call on Sarawak's Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu at his office in Petra Jaya, Kuching, yesterday.

Stemmer said the pharmaceutical giant has set up a RM500 million company to produce contact lenses in Johor Baru, adding that he will recommend Swiss companies, particularly those with niche expertise, to consider investing in the biodiversity sector.

He said so far, 120 small- and medium-scale enterprises from Switzerland have invested in Malaysia, including Nestle, which has been here for over a hundred years and employed over 20,000 people.

"These companies are important because they create jobs, and during this trying time, any company which creates jobs is good for the country where they do it," he said. He said bilateral trade was in Malaysia's favour valued at US\$800 million (RM2.9 billion) against Switzerland's US\$600 million (RM2.2 billion). — Bernama