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Pride of Kota Kinabalu's waterfront

By New Straits Times (by G. Umakanthan)



An integrated mixed development is to take pride of place in Sabah's capital, right smack on the waterfront in Kota Kinabalu city centre, along Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens.

Described as the city's "most exciting tourist attraction development to date", Kota Kinabalu City Waterfront (KKCW) will take the form of a 2km-long boardwalk rising above the sea on stilts and built with eco-friendly materials.

According to developer Waterfront Urban Development Sdn Bhd (WUD), the project is set to be "a thriving waterfront pedestrian walkway that will seamlessly connect a variety of retail, lifestyle, residential and hotel establishments".

To be completed by 2010, the RM500 million KKCW will incorporate environmentally friendly features such as high-tech LED lighting, energy conserving air-conditioning systems and solar powered pedestrian lighting along the boardwalk.

"The project was conceptualised after detailed studies of several thriving world-class waterfront attractions," WUD managing director Reymee Mohamed Hussein said.

These sites included Darling Harbour in Sydney, Australia; Cape Town Waterfront in South Africa; Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong; Canary Wharf in London, England; and Clark Quay Riverside in Singapore.

Launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in Kota Kinabalu at the close of last month when he also unveiled the Sabah Development Corridor (SDC), KKCW is being undertaken in collaboration with the Kota Kinabalu City Hall.

WUD, Kuwait Finance House (Malaysia) Bhd and a consortium of Malaysian and Middle Eastern investors will fund the project.

“KKCW is in line with Kota Kinabalu’s overall urbanisation and development master plan ... it will increase the role of coastal cities as catalysts for modernisation and development,” Reymee said.

“We designed the development to unlock the potential of the city’s waterfront. It will feature one of the longest city waterfront boardwalks in Asia and is poised to become a tourist attraction as well as an integral part of Sabah’s hospitality industry.”

The retail element will be formed by “elegant stores and chic boutiques” in an open-air layout, as well as a luxury fashion mall catering to upscale consumers and tourists.

Aside from giving the city a new lifestyle heartbeat, Reymee said KKCW will also spur economic growth for Kota Kinabalu and provide employment and new business opportunities for local residents and businesses.

WUD is a subsidiary of Orienthold Waterfront Development Sdn Bhd, a private company established in 2004 with the principal objective of promoting the waterfront development concept.