

PAPER: NEW STRAITS TIMES (PRIME NEWS)

DATE: 23 MAY 2013

PAGE: 12

'Foreign workers more productive'

NO DISCRIMINATION:
85pc of Sime Darby
plantation workers
are foreigners

KRISTY INUS
KOTA KINABALU
news@nst.com.my

OIL palm plantations depend on foreign labour as they are hardworking and productive.

Sime Darby Plantations Sdn Bhd administration and foreign workers executive Jakaria Nasiran, who is based in Tawau, said yesterday at the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on immigrants issues in Sabah.

Jakaria, who oversees local and foreign workers, said 85 per cent of their workers were foreigners from Indonesia and the Philippines.

"This is despite giving priority to locals by cooperating with the State Human Resource Department to open vacancies to them first," he told commanding officer Datuk Azmi Ariffin.

"But yes, foreign workers are more hardworking and productive. As of April 2013, there are 5,523 workers working on 45,482 hectares in our plantation lands in Sabah."

Sime Darby is one of the largest oil palm growers in the world. Sabah state itself is a major oil palm producer with nearly 1.4 million hectares of land planted with the crop.

Jakaria said there were no differences in the perks and benefits given to local and foreign workers.

"We do not want to discriminate against foreign workers for fear they will turn away (causing us to lose manpower)," he said.

Earlier, it was also revealed that Muslim inter-marriage between immigrants and locals here was on an increasing trend over the last 13 years since 2000, resulting in Sabah's population growth.

A total of 19,781 Muslim marriages were recorded by Sabah Islamic Affairs Department (Jheains) between 2000 and October 2012, where 8,859 marriages involved foreign men and local women while 10,922 marriages involved foreign women and local men.

**ROYAL
COMMISSION
OF INQUIRY
ON SABAH
ILLEGALS**