

Headline

High percentage of employed individuals with HIV may affect nation

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KOTA KINABALU: Eighty two per cent of people affected by HIV in this country are individuals with jobs, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health revealed.

Its senior director, Dato Ir. Dr Johari Basri said that based on the Health Ministry statistics, nine cases are reported in the country daily, and by 2015 about 119,471 individuals may be affected.

He noted that until December 2009, more than 20 years after the HIV epidemic was first reported in the country, 87,710 people have been infected with the disease mostly from drug abuse.

Until that same period he said 13,394 cases of death due to AIDS were recorded.

Due to the high percentage of cases affecting employed individuals, Johari expressed concern about its effects on the nation's workforce.

He said it was in view of this that the department had organised the nationwide Occupational Safety and Health Week to promote awareness on the importance of safety and health in the work place.

The campaign started July 11-15.

In conjunction with the campaign, Johari launched Novotel iBorneo Kota Kinabalu's Code of Practice on Prevention and Eradication of Drug, Al-



Jacques (left) presenting a souvenir to Johari during the launch.

cohol and Substance Abuse in the Work Place/Code of Practice on Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS at the Work Place on July 13.

He lauded the hotel's initiative in implementing the code of practices which set a high standard in creating a safer and healthier work environment for employees.

Meanwhile, in his speech during the launch, hotel general manager Jacques Leizerovici noted that Accor, the hotel's parent company, as a foremost global leader is the hotel and service

industry has 150,000 employees in 100 countries and all are involved in the fight against AIDS.

He said Accor has developed a pragmatic approach which adapts to local features (economic, political, social and cultural) to be as efficient as possible.

He also said that the travel and tourism sector which employs 235 million people can leverage its workforce and raise customers' awareness to improve prevention and treatment efforts.