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Sun Life ready to keep growth going in Malaysian market despite challenges



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PETALING JAYA, May 27 — Financial services company Sun Life is confident it will continue reaping the growth potential offered in the Malaysian market by riding on its strong bancassurance and bancatakaful distribution capabilities to embrace both direct and hybrid agency channels.

Sun Life president and chief executive officer Kevin Strain said its 10-year success story in Malaysia has proven opportunities will continue to flourish for the insurance and family takaful provider.

“I’m so proud of Malaysia and not just the growth. We’ve seen our stakeholders, partners, advisers, and the community benefit from Sun Life Malaysia.

“We returned three times the growth in income and almost half of the investment Sun Life and Khazanah Nasional Bhd made in cash dividends. So, we’ve been in an incredible investment here in Malaysia,” he said at the official launch of Sun Life’s 10th-year anniversary celebration.

Sun Life Malaysia Assurance Bhd and Sun Life Malaysia Takaful Bhd is a joint venture by Sun Life and Khazanah.

Strain said since its inception in 2013, Sun Life Malaysia managed to triple its market share and serve over 1.2 million clients.

“Malaysia is very big in my heart because it was the first country that I was able to bring the Sun Life family into. It was great to see its growth. Malaysia is all about opportunities. In every place we operate, there are always challenges but the opportunity here is great because of our partnership, strategy and economic growth,” he noted.

Takaful driving growth, sales

President of Sun Life Asia Ingrid Johnson shared that Malaysia’s operation has always been very strong in takaful offerings.

“We are the first in Malaysia in takaful bancassurance with our products. We are actually using the ideas in Malaysia to export to the rest of the region,” she said, adding that the country also contributes sizeable earnings to the group.

“We’re serving nations like India and China (but) the 1.2 million clients (in Malaysia) are very sizeable in earnings. That’s the number we don’t disclose but from a sales perspective, Malaysia continues to be very important,” she said.

In total, Sun Life serves 84 million clients in Asia.

Strategy for the next 10 years

Chief executive officer and president/country head of Sun Life Malaysia Raymond Lew said their strong bancassurance partnership with CIMB Bank would be further strengthened.

“Certainly, we will broaden our distribution network. What we want to do is to continue to work with them to collaborate and support each other. CIMB has eight million customers, so if we can provide for these people, we will be very, very sizeable.

“On top of that, we also see a lot of clients like to utilise advisers to personalise service. They rely on advisers for complex kinds of insurance protection planning. So, we are also growing our agency aggressively,” Lew said.

He noted that Sun Life Malaysia’s productivity is three times higher than the industry average, without disclosing the number. “So, we thought that by doing all these in the next 10 years, we will be very strong,” he added.

He said Sun Life Malaysia also saw increased receptivity towards insurance and takaful protection following the Covid-19 pandemic and is working on offering accessible insurance and takaful coverage to the underserved customer segment.

“So, that’s why we see the blue ocean in providing more family takaful solutions in the country,” he said. — Bernama