

## Mulpha unit bullish on China industrial coating operations



■ By KAMARUL YUNUS

MULPHA International Bhd stands to benefit from its industrial coating operations in China as its unit there targets the lion's share of plastic coatings for the country's huge mobile phone market.

China, the world's most populous nation, produces about 200 million handphones a year. Major phone makers Motorola, Nokia and LG have factories in China.

"There are 1.3 billion people in China. This provides us a potentially huge market for our products," said C.L. Ko, general manager of Manfield Coatings Co Ltd.

Manfield is a subsidiary of Hong Kong-listed Greenfield Chemical Holdings Ltd, of

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## Toy sector still top user of Manfield's coatings

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which Mulpha International is the ultimate holding company.

Ko said the prospects are bright for industrial coatings in the electronics industry, especially in the mobile phone sector, or "teletronics".

He said Manfield's earnings and product promotion will benefit when major mobile phone markets based in China boost their exports.

Manfield's coating products are already used in 80 per cent of Motorola handphones made in China, Ko told Malaysian journalists during a recent visit to Manfield's office in Hong Kong and its factory in Shenzhen, China.

Manfield also has a joint venture with German and Japanese partners to tap the potential of the plastic coatings for handphones and non-stick high temperature resistant coatings for kitchen ware.

Called Weilburger Manfield Ltd, the joint venture's shareholders are Manfield (45 per cent), Germany's Weilburger (45 per cent) and Japan's Cashew Coatings (10 per cent).

Ko said Weilburger Manfield will initially focus on producing plastic coatings for mobile phones.

"We hope to achieve a 25 per cent increase in turnover this year from last year's HK\$160 million (HK\$100 = RM49.21)," he said.

At the moment, the toy industry is still the largest consumer of Manfield's self-developed coatings, accounting for 55.8 per cent of total coating production in 2003, while electronics and handphones accounted for 11.2 per cent and 7.2 per cent respectively.

Manfield managing director Yuen Shu Wah said Greenfield Chemical expects to chart double-digit growth in sales.

Last year earnings were affected by rising prices of raw materials and crude oil. Nevertheless, profits remained healthy on more than 20 per cent growth in sales.

Manfield manufactures and sells industrial coatings such as stoving enamels for metal, plastic coatings, pad-printing inks, powder coatings, can coatings, special-pattern coatings and surface treatment agents and paint removers.