

The Official Newsletter of Sarawak State Legislative Assembly



# The Legislature

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**FIRST EDITION**




**THE LEGISLATURE**  

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Source: DUNS, 2018



Source: DUNS, 2018



Source: DUNS, 2017



Source: DUNS, 2018



The Secretary's Office,  
Sarawak State Legislative Assembly,  
Petra Jaya, 93502 Kuching,  
Sarawak, Malaysia.  
082-441955  
duns@sarawak.gov.my



<https://duns.sarawak.gov.my>



Source: DUNS, 2020

# THE LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE

## *EDITOR-IN-CHIEF*

**YB DATUK AMAR HAJI MOHAMAD ASFIA BIN AWANG NASSAR**

## **ADVISOR**

**YB DATO GERAWAT GALA**  
**Deputy Speaker**

## **ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

**PELE PETER TINGGOM**  
**DUNS Secretary**

## ***GRAPHIC DESIGNER***

**HASFARINI BINTI HASSIM**  
DUNS Research & Resource Centre Unit

## **DUNS PHOTOGRAPHERS**

**LUKAS JAMMANY ANAK KATED | ROMZI BIN BUJANG**  
General Administration & Building Unit

## **STAFF EDITOR**

**ABANG MOHAMMAD ADIB BIN ABANG  
SALLEHHADIN**

**DUNS Committee Unit**

**AISHA PARVEEN BINTI BADRON**

**DUNS Publication Unit**

**NUR AZIRA BINTI ABDUL KADIR**  
**DUNS Corporate Communication Division**

**RABIAH BINTI ABDUL KADIR**  
**DUNS Research & Resource Center Unit**

**SHARIFAH SHAZZEA BINTI WAN AKIL**  
**Sarawak State Attorney-General's Chambers**



# STATE'S POLICIES: NEAR TO THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE OF SARAWAK, WELCOMING THE STATE BUDGET 2020

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INITIATIVES 2019/ 2020

## SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER'S VIEW

Greetings and Salam Sarawakku Sayang.

When I assumed office as Chief Minister three years ago after the untimely demise of Pehin Sri Haji Adenan Bin Haji Satem my first thought was to continue the policies of my late predecessor while making the necessary changes along the way to cope with the changing needs of time. Equally important is the need for Sarawak to continue to enhance unity and harmony among its multi-racial and multi-religious society that has been the pillar of strength of the State's socio-economic development programme.

It goes without saying that the State development must be within the framework of the State's law. As such, the Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) must be placed in high regard by all Sarawakians including the Honourable Members from both sides of the political divide in the august House. The production of this newsletter is part of the effort to ensure that the public is well-updated and informed on parliamentary issues, roles and businesses of the legislature, government policies and activities of the DUN as an important part of the State's development.

Since 13th January 2017, the day I came to office, the Sarawak Government have introduced more than 80 development initiatives for the wellbeing of the *rakyat* and the development of Sarawak. The progress of these initiatives are closely monitored to make sure that their implementation is always on track. The State's oil company PETROS, the Development Bank of Sarawak (DBOS), the Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA) and Unit for Other Religions (UNIFOR) are some of the State's development initiatives that have successfully been establishment to further the State's interest and enhance its development. The taking over of the Bakun Hydro-electric dam from the Federal Government is also a major achievement to enable Sarawak to have full control of its power production.

The Sarawak Government's first priority is the interest, the welfare and the well-being of the *rakyat*. The rural-biased budget and development will continue to be mainstay of the State's development policies primarily to lessen the urban-rural economic divide. We have readjusted our development policies in order to be able to cope with the demand and requirement of the post-COVID-19 era. I sincerely hope that all development programmes, the infrastructure and utilities development in particular, will go according to plan, and God willing by 2030 we can achieve a developed State status.

We always welcome the counsel of His Excellency, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud to continue to foster harmony, peace and unity among our people of various racial and religious background regardless of their political affiliation for our common good. We are very much encouraged by his well-meaning views on the socio-economic initiatives that have been introduced by the Government.

Finally, I would like to extend my greatest appreciation to our civil servants for their unwavering support, total commitment, contribution and hard work in ensuring good governance and an effective and timely service delivery to the people. Thank you.

The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg  
CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK



THE LEGISLATURE

# Chairman's Note

Assalamualaikum & Salam Sejahtera.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly (DUNS) Newsletter.

The DUNS Building symbolizes the People's Sovereignty and Parliamentary Democracy. It is Sarawak's highest law-making body where the elected representatives formulate policies, approve the budget and debate on the affairs of the State. The DUNS is unicameral and is based on Westminster model.

Previously known as General Council and later on as Council Negri it had its first meeting in Bintulu on 8th September 1867, making it the oldest legislative institution in Malaysia. It is the largest Legislative Assembly in Malaysia with 82- strong membership.

Its second meeting was held in Sibul and its third meeting was in Kuching. Since then all subsequent meetings were held in Kuching and not outside the State's capital.

The history of Sarawak and the legislature are intertwined and interwoven. The events that took place in Sarawak are brought into the legislature. At the same time the laws passed by the DUNS are disseminated throughout the State.

The principal purpose of the Newsletter is to update the people on parliamentary issues, policies, the roles of their representatives in voicing out the people's problem in chartering the future course for the State.

It is my fervent hope that this Newsletter will provide the latest information and the current happenings in the DUNS.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Honourable Members and Government officers for their unwavering support, total commitment, contribution and hard work in ensuring good governance and an effective service delivery especially in the project implementation. Thank you.



The Honourable Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Asfia Bin Awang Nassar  
SPEAKER OF SARAWAK STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Source: DUNS, 2020

## THE SARAWAK STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN MANAGING THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FIFTH SESSION DURING MCO

By: Nur Azira Binti Abdul Kadir

To ensure a safe proceeding during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) conducted a site visit and briefing at the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly building on 6th May 2020, in preparation for the First Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Eighteenth Sarawak State Legislative Assembly that was held for one day on 11th May 2020. This followed a previous visit that took place on 24th April 2020.

Among those present at the visit and briefing were the Speaker, the Honourable Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Asfia Bin Awang Nassar, Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Dato Gerawat Gala, and the Secretary, Mr. Pele Peter Tinggom.

The preparation was made to ensure that the assembly was held in line with MOH guidelines under the Movement Control Order (MCO) which was still being enforced in Sarawak on the day of the meeting.

Preparations included the implementation of standard operating procedures, namely the provision of temperature scanners at each entrance, face masks and hand sanitisers, as well as ensuring at least one metre (1m) distance between each seat of every Honourable Members present during the assembly.

The presence of the Heads of Department and the media were also limited during the meeting to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus outbreak.



Source: DUNS, 2020



Source: DUNS, 2020



## 11TH MAY 2020: FIRST MEETING OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH SARAWAK STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

By: Aisha Parveen Binti Badron

The Sarawak State Legislative Assembly (DUNS) conducted their First Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Eighteenth Sarawak State Legislative Assembly on 11th May 2020 in accordance with Article 21(1) of the Sarawak State Constitution.

There was no opening ceremony for the session due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Speaker, the Honourable Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Asfia Bin Awang Nassar had stated that the sitting was held to fulfill the State's constitutional requirement for the assembly to meet every six months.

Necessary precautions were taken to ensure the safety of those who were present during the sitting through the implementation of standard operating procedures outlined by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) and the National Security Council (NSC).

The assembly started with a prayer session led by Encik Abang Mohamad Adib Bin Abang Sallehadin, a staff member of the DUNS. This was followed by a one minute of silence that was observed in memory of the victims of COVID-19. The assembly subsequently passed two Supplementary Bills tabled by the Deputy Chief Minister, the Honourable Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas, who is also the Second Minister of Finance. Several motions were also tabled, including the motion to refer the resolution on the Second Supplementary Estimates of Development Expenditure 2019 and 2020 to the Committee of Supply.

The Supplementary Supply (2019) Bill, 2020 sought an additional RM299.17 million for expenditure on services that are not fully provided for in the 2019 State Budget. Meanwhile, for the Supplementary Supply (2020) Bill, 2020, RM382.3 million was authorised as additional payments above the expenditure approved in the 2020 State Budget. The sitting was adjourned at about 10.40 a.m., less than two hours after it started at 9.00 a.m.





## BILLS TABLED DURING 4TH – 13TH NOVEMBER 2019 DUNS SITTING

By: Sharifah Shazzea Binti Wan Akil

During the Second Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Eighteenth Sarawak State Legislative Assembly on 4th November 2019, the Government tabled the First Reading for the following Bills:

1. Strata (Subsidiary Titles) Bill, 2019;
2. Natural Resources and Environment (Amendment) Bill, 2019;
3. Strata Management Bill, 2019;
4. Sarawak State Library (Amendment) Bill, 2019; and
5. Sarawak Heritage Bill, 2019.

### **Strata (Subsidiary Titles) Bill, 2019**

During the Second Reading on the same day the Honourable Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for International Trade and Industry, Industrial Terminal and Entrepreneur Development and Second Minister for Urban Development and Natural Resources, Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah Bin Ali Hasan informed that the purpose of the Bill was to address the inadequacy of law currently governing strata development in Sarawak. Hence the Strata (Subsidiary Titles) Bill, 2019 was introduced to replace the Strata Titles Ordinance 1995 (Chapter 18).

The State Government acknowledged that due to rapid changes in land development especially in the increasing trend of strata living concept in cities in Sarawak, certain clauses were included in the Bill.

The main objectives of the Bill were to ensure the protection of all stakeholders in strata development and the dynamism and relevance of the clauses in tandem with the current and expected future real estate and building industry trends. The Bill was also important to enable greater sense of accountability amongst professionals involved in strata development; to improve and expedite issuance of parent and subsidiary titles; and to provide enhanced provisions for enforcement and investigation powers of the Ordinance.

The Bill was then seconded by the Honourable Minister for Education, Science and Technological Research, Dato Sri Michael Manyin Anak Jawong and debated by three members from the Government and one member from the opposition party.

The Bill was deliberated by the Committee and agreed to without amendment. The Third Reading of the Bill was agreed to and passed in the House.

### **Natural Resources and Environment (Amendment) Bill, 2019**

The Bill had its Second Reading on the 5th November 2019 on which the Honourable Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for International Trade and Industry, Industrial Terminal and Entrepreneur Development and Second Minister for Urban Development and Natural Resources, Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah Bin Ali Hasan informed that the purpose of the Bill was to amend the Natural Resources and Environment Ordinance [Cap. 84] (1958 Ed) to strengthen the regulatory mechanism for sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of environmental quality in Sarawak.





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The two main objectives of the amendment were to enhance the provisions on penalties and powers of the Natural Resources and Environment Board Sarawak (NREB) for better enforcement of the law and effective deterrent in combating non-compliance of environmental law in the State; and to expand the laws relating to open burning particularly on commercial farming to facilitate better compliance with current environmental needs and practices.

Lack of accountability and poor compliance from various parties are the main causes of haze pollution, water contamination and land degradation in the State. Therefore, the increase in the maximum penalty for offenses under the Principal Ordinance is expected to act as a deterrent to potential offenders.

To further enhance enforcement of the Principal Ordinance, the proposed clauses provides protection and incentives to informers to encourage them to come forward and provide crucial information to the relevant authorities.

The Bill was seconded by the Honourable Minister for Education, Science and Technological Research, Dato Sri Michael Manyin Anak Jawong and debated by 12 members from the Government and two members from the opposition party.

The Bill was deliberated by the Committee and agreed to without amendment. The Third Reading of the Bill was agreed to and passed in the House.

## *Strata Management Bill, 2019*

The Honourable Minister for Local Government and Housing, Dato Sri Prof. Dr Sim Kui Hian on the Second Reading of the Bill informed the House that there were no laws that is dedicated to regulating the management of strata building in the State.

Therefore, the proposed Bill was created to address the inadequacy in regulating the current needs of strata building maintenance and management to benefit both owners and tenants.

The focus of the proposed Bill was to make it mandatory for strata development to form a management body responsible for the maintenance of the building and sinking fund accounts. In addition, the Bill empowered the establishment of a Tribunal to settle disputes between parties of strata building community.

To ensure effective enforcement, the penalty for contravening provisions of the new law would range from RM5,000 to RM250,000 and/or imprisonment ranging from one to five years depending on the nature of the offence.

The Bill was then seconded by the Honourable Minister for Welfare, Community Wellbeing and Women, Family and Development, Dato Sri Hajah Fatimah Abdullah and debated by four members from the Government and two members from the opposition party.

The Bill was deliberated by the Committee and agreed to without amendment. The Third Reading of the Bill was agreed to and passed in the House.

## *Sarawak State Library (Amendment) Bill, 2019*

The Bill had its Second Reading on the 5th November 2019 and the Honourable Minister in the Chief Minister's Department (Integrity and Ombudsman), Datuk Haji Talib Bin Zulpilip informed the House that purposes of the Bill was to amend the State Library Ordinance 1999 (Cap.29) and to empower the Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA) to take over the powers, roles and functions previously exercised and carried out by the Sarawak Information and Technology Resources Council.



The reason for the empowerment of SMA was due to the fact that Sarawak Information and Technology Council which was given the overall supervision and management of Pustaka Negeri Sarawak was repealed by the enactment of the Sarawak Multimedia Authority Ordinance 2017 and the Council thereunder ceased to exist.

Under such circumstances, the State Government considered it necessary to amend the current Principal Ordinance to empower SMA which would ensure better administration and management of Pustaka Negeri Sarawak.

The Bill was seconded by the Honourable Minister for Transport, Datuk Lee Kim Shin and debated by four members from the Government.

The Bill was deliberated by the Committee and agreed to without amendment. The Third Reading of the Bill was agreed to and passed in the House.

### ***Sarawak Heritage Bill, 2019***

On the 5th November 2019, during the Second Reading, the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture and Minister for Youth and Sports, Datuk Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah informed the House that the Sarawak Cultural Heritage Ordinance 1993 (Cap. 6) is the current law on heritage in Sarawak. However, there was still a need for a better and encompassing heritage law to address a broader scope of heritage and current issues relating to the protection, conservation and preservation of the State's heritage.

Therefore, in addition to repealing the Sarawak Cultural Heritage Ordinance 1993 (Cap.6), the proposed Bill allowed for the establishment of the Sarawak Heritage Council, a body which would advise the Government on policy and strategy for the administration and management of heritage in Sarawak. Under the proposed Bill, a fund to be known as the Sarawak Heritage Fund would be established to provide financial assistance to individual owners for preservation works on heritage building, monuments or sites. The scope of heritage was widened to include underwater heritage and intangible cultural heritage and provisions relating to power of enforcement was proposed.

The Bill was then seconded by the Honourable Minister for Transport, Datuk Lee Kim Shin and debated by 18 members from the Government and two members from the opposition party.

The Bill was deliberated by the Committee and agreed to without amendment. The Third Reading of the Bill was agreed to and passed in the House.





## THE SARAWAK STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

By: Rabiah Binti Abdul Kadir

On 6th November 2018, the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sports, Datuk Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah tabled a Ministerial Motion for the establishment of a Consultative Committee in response to the announcement of the formation of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) Steering Committee chaired by the then Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The Motion was debated by 31 Honourable Members and was unanimously agreed and passed in the House.

The Consultative Committee comprises 14 members from all political parties, namely Speaker of the House, the Honourable Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Asfia Bin Awang Nassar as Chairman of the Committee, the Honourable Datuk Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, the Honourable Dato

Gerawat Gala, the Honourable Datuk Hajah Sharifah Hasidah Binti Sayeed Aman Ghazali, the Honourable Datuk Snowdan Lawan, the Honourable Encik Abdullah Bin Saidol, the Honourable Datuk Sebastian Ting Chiew Yew, the Honourable Dato Haji Idris Bin Buang, the Honourable Dato Henry Harry Jinep, the Honourable Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh, the Honourable Encik Chiew Chiu Sing, the Honourable Encik See Chee How, the Honourable Puan Irene Mary Chang Oi Ling and the Honourable Encik Ali Biju.

The Committee is established to determine and agree upon the representations for submission to the Sarawak representatives of the MA63 Committee to advance and safeguard the special interests, rights and position of Sarawak as enshrined in MA63 and the Federal Constitution and to meet the expectations of Sarawakians for greater autonomy and devolution of powers to the State.

This is an important step for Sarawak and the way forward to handle matters and negotiations on the MA63 which includes pertinent recommendations of the Cobbold Commission and Inter-Government Committee (IGC) report. The IGC reports were incorporated into the Malaysia Agreement 1963 and as one of the constitutional instruments annexed thereto with proper safeguards which led to the formation of Malaysia.

As such, it is imperative that a mechanism such as the Consultative Committee is put in place to ensure the views and aspiration of Sarawakian are incorporated into the representation to be submitted on behalf of the State to the MA63 Committee. In the words of Apai Jugah before the formation of Malaysia, "*Anang baka tebu, manis ba pun tang tabar ba ujung*" which means, "Do not be like the sugar cane - sweet at the beginning but become tasteless towards the end."

The Federal Constitution which is the supreme law of Malaysia was founded on MA63. Therefore, any exercise to review and revisit MA63 must comply with the principles and provisions contained in the agreement to ensure the best interest of all Sarawakians.



Source: Malay Mail, 2019



## The Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee Benchmarking Trip to New Zealand

By: Aisha Parveen Binti Badron



SOURCE: DUNS, 2018

From 1st to 8th December 2019, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) headed by the Honourable Ir Aidel Bin Lariwoo made an official Parliamentary study visit to New Zealand's Parliament to benchmark the Finance and Expenditure Committee (FEC).

The delegation consisted of eight members of the PAC as well as three ex-officios. The eight members were the Chairman of the Committee himself, the Honourable Ir Aidel bin Lariwoo, the Honourable Dato Ranum Mina, the Honourable Encik Chiew Chiu Sing, the Honourable Encik Alexander Vincent, the Honourable Tuan Haji Chee Bin Kadir, the Honourable Encik See Chee How, the Honourable Ir Lo Khare Chiang and the Honourable Encik Yussibnosh Balo, whilst, the three ex-officios were Datu Antonio Kathie Galis, the Director of Administration Unit of the Chief Minister's Department; Encik John Kennedy Janang, the Principal Assistant Secretary of the State Financial Secretary's Office and Encik Dampa Long, the Acting Director of the Internal Audit of the Chief Minister's Department. The delegation were accompanied by the DUNS Secretariat, Cik Sharifah Shazzea Binti Wan Akil, the Deputy Secretary of the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly and Puan Magdalen Nangkai, the Senior Administrative Officer.

The visit was conducted to gain first-hand knowledge of operations within the Finance and Expenditure Committee (FEC) of New Zealand (formerly the Public Accounts Committee of New Zealand) and to study the workings and scrutiny of the New Zealand Government's finance and expenditure. The FEC is known for holding its premier status among New Zealand's Parliament in controlling and examining the Government's expenditure.

During the study visit, the PAC visited the New Zealand Parliament House in Wellington, where they were welcomed by a Maori cultural dance and a speech by Mr Winton Holmes, the Inter-Parliamentary Relations Advisor. The occasion also saw the Committee exchanging greetings with an impromptu *pantun* in three different languages namely Malay, Bidayuh and Chinese and a performance of *Rasa Sayang* to their hosts.

Thereafter, they were brought in to observe the FEC sitting chaired by Madam Deborah Russel. Their committee comprises the Honourable Member Deputy Fletcher Tabuteau and 11 other members that proportionately represents the five parties in their Parliament.

The members of the delegation were also briefed on the Select Committees of the New Zealand Parliament by Mr Hayley Locke, the Clerk of Economic Development, Science and Innovation; Education and Workforce Select Committee at the Asian SC Room. They proceeded with a tour of the Parliamentary Library Building by Mr John Woodcock, the Finance Business Partner, Office of the Clerk and Parliamentary Services at the Parliamentary Library Building.

The visit was meant to foster a closer relationship between both Government of New Zealand and the Government of Sarawak. The visit had also allowed the members of the PAC to be exposed to the international political environment and parliamentary system which enabled them to exchange views, ideas and insights on the parliamentary practices and procedures as well as topics of common interests.

Hence, the study visit was proven beneficial to the members' continuous learning and training process in terms of their role as legislative auditors to the Government of Sarawak, particularly with regards to the management of accounts in the implementation of development projects and policies, as well as in the improvement of the Government's overall transparency and accountability in carrying out their daily tasks.



# SWEARING-IN-CEREMONY

By: Nur Azira Binti Abdul Kadir



Source: CM Office, 2017

The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg was sworn in as the 6th Chief Minister of Sarawak before the Yang Dipertua Negeri Sarawak, Tun Abdul Taib Mahmud at Astana Negeri in Petra Jaya on 13th January 2017. His appointment followed the passing of Tan Sri Adenan Satem on 11th January 2017.



Source: DUNS, 2020

The Honourable Dato Gerawat Gala was officially sworn in as the Deputy Speaker of the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly for the 3rd term before Sarawak Governor, His Excellency Tun Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud at Astana Negeri Sarawak on 30th July 2020. A Kelabit who was born in Bario, he is also the current State Assemblyman for N.78 Mulu.



Source: Utusan Borneo, 2019

Pele Peter Tinggom, the son of former Member of Parliament for Saratok, the late Dato Sri Peter Tinggom, has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly on September 3, 2019. His appointment was in accordance with Article 22A of the Sarawak State Constitution.



Source: Dayak Daily, 2020



Source: Astro Awani, 2020

# SARAWAK EFFORTS IN FACING COVID-19

By: Nur Azira Binti Abdul Kadir

In early 2020, a global health crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic struck nearly every country around the world. To protect and improve the well-being of Sarawakians who are greatly affected by the pandemic, the Sarawak Government has taken various proactive measures and aids such as the following:

## Economic Stimulus Package

In recent years, the global economy has been confronted with numerous challenges leading to its slowdown, primarily driven by uncertainties over prolonged trade tensions between the United States and China which has dampened international trade performance. These challenges are now further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the Malaysian economy experienced its slowest growth at 3.6% in the fourth quarter of 2019 due to lacklustre performance in trade, disruptions of commodity supplies and low levels of investment. Both current global and national economic scenarios will negatively impact Sarawak's socio-economic performance in the long run.

In this regard, the State Government has taken the initiative by introducing the *Bantuan Khas Sarawakku Sayang (BKSS)* package. These measures target front-line personnel, households and businesses who at this time are in dire need of support.

Overall, the total amount of funds injected into the Sarawak economy through BKSS 2020 is RM2.55 billion. The package is segmented into the following three sections, which are:

- BKSS 1.0 amounted to RM1.15 billion;
- BKSS 2.0 amounting to Rm1.10 billion; and
- BKSS 3.0 amounted to RM0.30 billion.

The measures announced in BKSS 1.0 and 2.0 include:

- Cash Payments to Citizens of the B40 Group;
- Deferred repayment of interest-free loans and loans for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);
- Utility bill discounts for consumers in Sarawak;

- Exemption of business license payment as well as discounted rentals for dealers; and
- Monthly incentive payments for front-line personnel who are involved in the fight against COVID-19.

Meanwhile, BKSS 3.0 contains more inclusive measures, including:

- Incentives for the Head of Household of B40 including bachelors aged 21 and above with an income of RM2,000 per month and below;
- Additional Special Grant to sellers and small traders registered by local authorities through Sarawak Pay;
- Special monthly allowance for the front-line workers that involved in combating COVID-19 in Sarawak;
- Incentives for owners and *penambang* operators registered under the Sarawak Rivers Board (SRB);



Source: Astro Awani, 2020

- Incentives for van passengers' operators, taxi drivers, bus operators and schools van registered in Sarawak;
- Special Grants to tourist guides and licensed Taman Negara tourist guides; and
- BSN Mobile Bank branch services equipped with MEPS ATM machines to rural areas.

The BKSS package balances the needs of the people and businesses to cushion the impact of economic slowdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Government shares the pain of the *rakyat* during these trying times, especially the ones who were hit the hardest by this pandemic such as the hawkers, night market traders and vendors.

#### *Distribution of Food Supply Assistance*

Besides the economic stimulus package, the State Government provided food supply assistance to the people affected by COVID-19 through the Food Supply Chain Sub-committee.

This assistance was being distributed to all 82 state constituencies, particularly in rural and urban areas, the urban poor and those with no income as a result of the Movement Control Order (MCO).

Distribution of food supply assistance to the targeted groups was done via land, river and air transports.

Apart from the sub-committee, state assemblymen have undertaken their own efforts in extending food assistance to residents in their constituencies.

#### *Sarawak Tightened Border Control*

During the MCO, the State Government has tightened the state border entrance as a measure to prevent invasion from neighbouring countries that could pose a threat to the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The border entrances that were tightened include Malaysia-Brunei border and the Sarawak-Kalimantan border.

In addition, return flights to Kuching International Airport were also limited although there were no direct flights from China.

The Sarawak Government also set up a subcommittee and approved the provision to intensify its monitoring assets to protect the state's borders from being invaded by foreigners during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period.

#### *Bringing Stranded Students Home*

The State Government also cooperated with the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, Sarawak Volunteers and Rumah Sarawak to bring Sarawakian students home from Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah during the MCO.

The students were required to undergo swab tests for COVID-19 before being allowed to board their flights to Sarawak and a two-week self-quarantine period in accordance with the 14-day Stay Home Notice (SHN).

As seen through these initiatives, the State Government has demonstrated that it is a caring government that prioritises its people in the midst of economic uncertainties and restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak in Sarawak. This is over and above the State Government's continuous effort to protect the well-being of Sarawakians while steering Sarawak towards becoming a developed State by 2030.



Source: The Borneo Post, 2019

## DBOS - AN ALTERNATIVE FINANCING INITIATIVE FOR SARAWAK

By: Abang Mohammad Adib Bin Abang Sallehadin

The State Government establishes the Development Bank of Sarawak (DBOS) as an alternative financing initiative for Sarawak. It was officially launched by the Chief Minister of Sarawak, The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg on 3rd November 2017 and had commenced its commercial business operations on 15th January 2018 with a start-up capital of RM500 million.

The establishment of DBOS was inspired by The Right Honourable Chief Minister through successful development banks in Japan, Germany and Singapore. Japan and Germany have their own development banks, namely Development Bank of Japan and KfW Development Bank, respectively. In Singapore, DBS Bank Ltd has managed to stimulate Singapore's economy despite being a city-state without natural resources.

Aimed to develop and promote key sectors that are considered of strategic importance to the overall socio-economic development objectives of Sarawak, DBOS serves as a financial institution to lend money to these key sectors which include public infrastructure, oil and gas, tourism and infrastructures, digital economy, real estate and agriculture. The financial service provided by DBOS in this respect includes term loans, bridging loans, project financing and bank guarantee.

However, DBOS receives its funding by way of capital injections made by DBOS holding companies, Sarawak State Government, statutory bodies and government-linked companies, in which depositors will be paid with market interest rates for deposits made into DBOS. In addition, the State Government had reaffirmed that Sarawak's state reserves are not deposited into DBOS.

With the establishment of DBOS, the State can alternatively tap into the funding provided by DBOS to finance socio-economic development projects within the State. This is expected to benefit high impact infrastructure and amenity projects such as Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification Scheme (SARES), Sarawak Alternative Water Supply (SAWAS) and road infrastructure development throughout the State.



Source: DBOS Official Website, 2017



## Implementation of *Projek Rakyat* in Sarawak

By: Abang Mohammad Adib Bin Abang Sallehadin

The Sarawak Government have decided to fully provide funds for *Projek Rakyat* including rural development projects. This is due to the fact that the Federal Government is no longer giving priority to these projects.

The State Government has allocated as much as RM500 million for these projects as announced in the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Meeting on 4th November 2019. Projects that are considered as *Projek Rakyat* are those in relation to construction of roads and bridges, provision of water and electricity supply, as well as development of housing and public amenities.

The development projects that are expected to benefit from the State Government's decision include projects linking the State coastal roads costing RM5.0 billion, water supply projects costing RM2.8 billion and electricity supply projects costing RM2.37 billion.

The *rakyat* are now beginning to feel the positive impact of the implementation of *Projek Rakyat* throughout the State. Some areas which used to have critical water issues are now receiving clean and treated water supply, while villages and longhouses in rural areas are now supplied with electricity and connected with towns and other communities through roads and bridges. The implementation of these projects is overseen by the Chief Minister YAB Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg.

The State Government's commitment towards *Projek Rakyat* is an indication of the Government's utmost concern towards the well-being and livelihood of the *rakyat* throughout the State.



Source: Sarawak Voice, 2019



Source: Sarawak Energy Official Website, 2019



Source: RECODA Official Website, 2020



Source: Unit Komunikasi Awam Sarawak (UKAS), 2020



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# Sarawak Alternative Rural Water Supply (SAWAS)

By: Aisha Parveen Binti Badron



Source: Jurutera Adda Official Website, 2019

Sarawak is undeniably blessed with abundance of rainfall and rivers, yet the people living in rural areas are still facing hardships not having clean and treated water supply to carry out their daily activities. The Sarawak Government under the able leadership of The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, the Chief Minister of Sarawak has placed a central and significant importance in improving the State's service delivery for the *rakyat* to enjoy better facilities as well as utilities such as treated water supply to enhance the quality of their everyday lives.

Statistically, as of 2020 the water supply coverage in the urban areas are almost 100%, whereas the coverage in the rural areas are only 61%. Hence, the State Government's Rural Transformation Initiatives are aimed at addressing the lack of basic infrastructure and social amenities in Sarawak's rural areas. It has been made an urgency to expedite the provision of water supply to the remaining 39% of the rural population who are still living without proper water supply.

As one of their major water supply policies, the Ministry of Utilities led by the Honourable Minister Dato Sri Stephen Rundi Anak Utom, through the Rural Water Supply Department (JBALB), has implemented Sarawak Alternative Rural Water Supply (SAWAS), an initiative to provide water supply to the rural population in Sarawak that had yet to receive nor enjoy the benefits of having clean and safe water.

SAWAS is one of the key rural water supply programmes implemented in order to achieve 100% portable and clean water coverage in Sarawak by the year 2025. It is an independent, stand-alone micro water supply system designed to supply potable water to areas where connection to the water grid is economically not practicable. The Sarawak Government wishes to achieve a 99% coverage of clean and treated water supply as targeted in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan. The SAWAS programme is necessary as it serves as a long-term measure to provide the rural people with the basic amenity of drinkable water.

In order to have piped water supply connected to these remote areas, it would indeed take many years; thus, SAWAS is the way forward for the State Government to achieve its target of 100% piped water supply by 2025 to these areas.



# Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification Scheme (SARES)

By: Aisha Parveen Binti Badron

Electricity is one of the essential necessities broadly recognised as bringing socio-economic and infrastructural improvements to rural areas of developing countries. In Malaysia, especially Sarawak, the implementation of the Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification Scheme (SARES) displays the Government's commitment in ensuring socio-economic development for the rural population. The main objective of the scheme is to replace the costly diesel generation with affordable 24-hour electricity supply.

SARES was launched on 9th June 2016 in Bintulu by the State Government to speed up efforts towards full electricity coverage in the State by utilizing renewable energy such as the solar and micro-hydro energy in Sarawak's interior. There are 323 villages comprising 8,708 households in remote areas of Sarawak will benefit from the implementation of SARES over the next five years through the funding of RM500 million.

SARES is an innovative Government-Community Partnership model implemented by Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB). An integrated initiative of the Sarawak Government, it aims to provide 24-hour electricity supply to remote communities where it is not feasible for a connection to the Sarawak Grid. The scheme mobilizes the Government machinery and agencies to help villagers build and subsequently own and operate more sustainable and affordable electricity generation systems.

Implementing SARES involves timely project delivery and maintenance of overall cost within budget in order to reach out to as many villages as possible. The scheme also develops local competency and capability in solar technology required to ensure the sustainability of the programme. Above all, it encourages participation among local communities in project implementation so that they are able to experience its benefits. SARES' sustainability can be seen from SEB's commitment towards the project in providing a sustainable solution to the rural electrification, technical experience with solar technologies and the capacity in the rural project execution.



Sources: Sarawak Energy Official Website, 2016



The State Government had planned to be more innovative in providing 24-hour electricity supply for the rural population as the State has very difficult terrains with mountains, hills, rivers and forests. Independently, through the Federal-funded Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), about 110,000 new rural households have been connected with 24-hour electricity supply. Statistically, the overall electricity coverage in Sarawak is 95% with rural coverage at 89% in the year 2017.

With SARES, the State Government intends to light up houses and communities in the most remote areas of Sarawak by the year 2025. Since 2016, 58 villages representing 1,400 households and 7,700 rural folks have benefitted from the program. For the year 2017, 32 more villages for about 700 households with 3,000 rural folks are expected to be electrified. There are over 320 remote villages that will be connected with the 24-hours electricity supply through the construction of this community-based solar and micro-hydro system.

During the launch of SARES, Dato Sri Stephen Rundi Anak Utom said of the programme: "Sarawak is on track to achieving 100% electricity coverage despite the logistical challenges faced due to our State's rugged terrains and sparse population. It is reassuring to note that the State's domestic coverage is now already at 90%. With SARES, we hoped to light up the remotest communities in the State. This will reduce the dependency on costly diesel generators which offers only limited hours of supply, alleviating the burden of the villagers. SARES is part of the State's Rural Electrification Masterplan which complements the present Rural Electrification Scheme (RES) and the Rural Power Supply Scheme (RPSS). The simultaneous implementation of these programmes will speed up the Government's Electrification Plan to close the gap between the rural and urban development. Electricity is the catalyst for change and this is instrumental in realizing our vision into becoming a developed State." He also commended on Sarawak Energy's spearheading initiative and in working with his Ministry on the shared mission to light up Sarawak with steady and reliable electricity.



Source: TV Sarawak, 2020



Source: Sarawak Voice, 2017

## ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

By: Nur Azira Binti Abdul Kadir

Sarawak Chief Minister, The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg is intensifying the Sarawak Government's effort to bring more developments to all regions in Sarawak, be it urban or rural areas. While the State Government is focusing on developing infrastructures and utilities to improve the wellbeing of the community, the State Government also needs to strengthen the economic foundation in each region. This is in line with the State Government's objective to create a balanced regional development throughout the State. Master plans have been prepared to ensure an orderly and systematic development for most of the regions and these plans provide sectoral economic development framework, proposed regional linkages and land uses.

Along the way, the State Government have made some adjustments so that the development of the central region of Sarawak can be more focused and specific. For this reason, Upper Rajang Development Agency (URDA) has been set up which comes under the purview of Regional Corridor Development Authority (RECODA) to enable the development of the Upper Rajang area to be given the right attention.

URDA focuses on the infrastructure needs in the Upper Rajang areas of Belaga, Bukit Mabong, Kapit, Song and

Kanowit especially in terms of increasing road connectivity within this area of the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE). Deputy Chief Minister and Chairman of URDA, The Honourable Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr James Jemut Masing stressed on the importance of roads, particularly in opening up areas for economic activities such as commercial agriculture activities.

At the initial stage, a total of 37 development projects amounting to RM1.5 billion consisting of 23 roads and 14 water supply projects had been approved by the Sarawak Government. All these projects will be implemented within these two years (2019 - 2020). As of October 2019, RECODA had tendered out 26 road packages with an estimated value of RM980 million, of which 21 out of 26 road packages had been awarded.

Recently, 22 infrastructure projects under the Upper Rajang Development Agency (URDA) are making physical progress since the construction phase kick-started in the second half of 2019. These road projects have seen some sections moving into road works and bridgeworks stages while others into site clearing and earthwork.

These projects are divided into three packages which costs a total of RM1.1 billion. Package 1 consists of road projects in Bukit Gorum, Katibas, Ngemah and Machan while Package 2 covers Pelagus and Baleh areas. Meanwhile, Package 3 covers Belaga and Murum areas.

All these projects are expected to be completed by 2022. URDA area covers approximately 100,000 sq kilometres with an estimated population of 169,000 and these projects will provide links to interior areas of Kapit Division.

Apart from URDA, the State Government has also undertaken new approaches in planning and developing other regions to accelerate infrastructure and economic development. This is also done through the RECODA by the establishment of Highland Development Agency (HDA) and Northern Region Development Agency (NRDA).

# DIGITAL ECONOMY INITIATIVES THROUGH SARAWAK MULTIMEDIA AUTHORITY (SMA)

By: Nur Azira Binti Abdul Kadir

Since the start of his tenure as Chief Minister, The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg has introduced 81 development initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of the rakyat and driving socio-economic progress in Sarawak.

Among which is the implementation of digital economy initiatives which has been progressing well under Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA). SMA is a regulatory body established pursuant to Section 3 of Sarawak Multimedia Authority Ordinance 2017 with the primary objective of spearheading, overseeing and facilitating the development and implementation of the communication, multimedia and the State's Digital Economy Initiatives programmes.

One such digital economy initiative is the construction of telecommunication towers across Sarawak, with 300 being erected between 2019 and 2020 and another 300 from 2021 onwards. The completion of these towers are expected to reduce the cost of connectivity and doing business which will benefit the people.

Another successfully implemented initiative is Sarawak ID, a unified digital identification for users of the State Government online services. It is being used by 135,000 users and it is supported by 14 State Government's web applications such as eLASIS and Talikhidmat. eLASIS is an important web application by the Land and Survey Department whereby users will be able to find property and land details from the department through the application.



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- In addition, implementation of the State's own digital wallet called Sarawak Pay had attracted 65,000 users and is adopted by more than 2,100 merchants while the Sarawak Data initiative had 147 sets of data from various State Government agencies ready for use.

Apart from that, five Digital Innovation Hubs have been established in Kuching, Sibu, Miri, Bintulu and Sarikei. These hubs have produced 75 new start-ups and have helped 1,458 entrepreneurs. At the same time, 26 research grants had been provided to five universities in Sarawak, benefitting 22 students at Master and Doctoral Degrees levels.

- The Digital Innovation Hubs serve as platforms to support and empower early-stage start-ups and social enterprises in Sarawak. They offer co-working spaces, incubation and acceleration programmes as well as access to the Sarawak Digital Village Ecosystem network.

- Various workshops, training, exhibitions and other programmes related to the digital economy were also conducted. To date, a total of 16 workshops on Industry 4.0 were attended by over 1,000 participants, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), operators and manufacturing workers; 194 computer training session saw participation from 30,969 people; 9,300 people visited exhibitions during SCATFair; and 869 students joined the Innovators Programmes.

Recently, the State Government has requested from Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to grant SMA the licence to operate a mobile internet service in order to resolve the internet woes faced by rural areas in Sarawak. This service will be subsidised by the State Government and will be affordable for the rural folks to have internet access. Furthermore, the State Government is also targeting to build at least 1,400 telecommunication towers by the year 2025 to provide the entire state with internet coverage.

Overall, these initiatives show that the State Government under the leadership of The Right Honourable Chief Minister walks the talk and delivers on its promises to the rakyat. The State Government through SMA will continue to strive and rise up to the challenges of developing and improving productivity and quality of digital life.



# PETROS – SARAWAK'S LOCAL OIL & GAS FIRM

*By: Abang Mohammad Adib Bin Abang Sallehadin*

Petroleum Sarawak Berhad (PETROS) was officially launched by the Chief Minister of Sarawak, The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg on 6th March 2018.

PETROS was established by the State Government with the objective of developing and transforming Sarawak's petroleum industry to benefit the State and its people. To achieve this, the State Government aims to attract more Sarawakians to be involved in the petroleum business in Sarawak. With the formation of PETROS, it is expected to create job opportunities for Sarawakians in the petroleum industry which in turn will increase their income and livelihood.

In addition, PETROS is also deemed to be a viable source for an alternative income for the State. It is the State Government's vision that the income derived from the trading of petroleum resources in the open market will be able to drive the development of other industries in the State including the development of public infrastructure and amenities for Sarawakians to be on par with the State's West Malaysian counterparts.

The formation of PETROS is truly an unprecedented initiative taken by the State Government to enable Sarawakians to actively participate in the extraction of oil and gas in Sarawak while simultaneously pursuing the State's rights in oil and gas under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 and the Federal Constitution.

In line with the State Government's objective, PETROS was thereafter awarded with a license for oil and gas prospecting and mining within the State by the State Government under the Oil Mining Ordinance 1958.

Meanwhile, PETROS recently has taken full control and authority over the supply, sales and distribution of natural gas within the State following the signing of an agreement with PETRONAS on 12th February 2020. With the agreement in place, PETRONAS agrees that PETROS shall be responsible for the supply of gas for industrial, commercial and residential purposes within the State effective 1st January 2020.



Source: DUNS, 2019

## **PETRONAS' Payment of the State Sales Tax (SST) to Sarawak**

*By: Abang Mohammad Adib Bin Abang Sallehadin*

Sarawak began to impose 5% sales tax on petroleum products since 1st January 2019 under the State's Sales Tax Ordinance 1998 as unanimously passed by the august House in November 2018. The measure to impose the State Sales Tax (SST) is expected to contribute significantly to the State's revenue to support its undertakings on major development programmes and projects within the State.

In recent development, PETRONAS has officially withdrawn its appeal against the High Court's decision, suggesting that PETRONAS is willing to concur with the State Government in respect of the payment of the SST.

With the additional revenue to the State, the State Government is committed to providing socio-economic development to the people of Sarawak. This will accelerate the State to achieve the status of a developed State by 2030.



# HYDROGEN ECONOMY INITIATIVES IN SARAWAK

By: Abang Mohammad Adib Bin Abang Sallehadin

The State Government has taken bold steps to promote environmental awareness to its people by introducing clean energy industry through the exploration of the hydrogen economy, diversifying from traditional energy sources that have serious repercussions on climate change.

Hydrogen technologies nowadays are well developed and have proven to be safe for use by communities across the world. In fact, many experts at the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) expressed favourable views for the future of hydrogen economy in Malaysia at the 12th General Assembly that was held on 27th April 2019. Based on Malaysia's Fuel Cell & Hydrogen Blueprint 2017, Malaysia is ready to embrace renewable resources as a way forward with the potential use of hydrogen energy as fuel cells in order to develop a clean and zero emission energy technology for a sustainable nation.

The initiative to promote clean energy in the State was introduced by the Chief Minister, The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari Bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, marking the State Government's commitment towards the usage of renewable energy for a cleaner environment through the transition to a reliable and clean transportation system and technology.

To kick start the initiative, the State Government has approved an allocation of RM20.3 million for R&D on hydrogen economy initiatives such as fuel cell technology,

hydrogen-powered vehicles and hydrogen-powered Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) which produces zero carbon emission.

The State Government's commitment toward the usage of a cleaner energy was further showcased with the official launch of Southeast Asia's first integrated hydrogen production plant and refuelling station together with the introduction of the State's first hydrogen-powered vehicles on 27th May 2019.

The most recent achievement by the State Government was the introduction of the hydrogen bus service in Kuching. The service marked a historical milestone for Sarawak public transportation system as it is the first to have hydrogen-fuelled buses in Southeast Asia. The initiative is a joint effort between the Sarawak Ministry of Transport and the Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) aimed at promoting a reliable, affordable, safe and eco-friendly public transportation system in the State.





Source: The Borneo Post, 2019



Source: The Borneo Post, 2018

## UNIFOR : INTER-RACIAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS HARMONY

By: Rabiah Binti Abdul Kadir

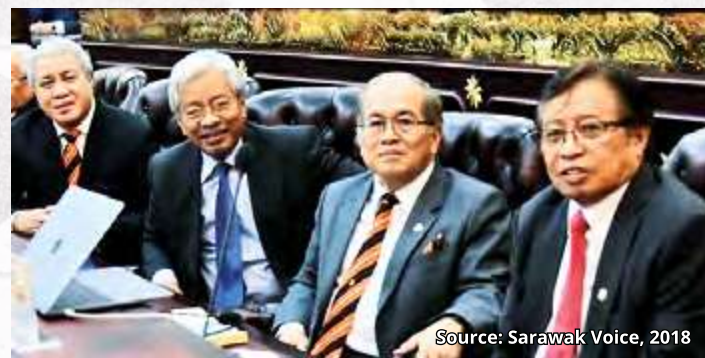
The Sarawak State Government has set up the Unit for Other Religions (UNIFOR) to regulate policies related to the promotion of interracial and interreligious harmony while evaluating, proposing and formulating policies, laws and regulations concerning other religions in Sarawak.

Formed on 24th August 2017, the unit which was formerly known as the Non-Islamic Affairs Unit was the brainchild of former Sarawak Chief Minister the late Pehin Sri Adenan Satem.

UNIFOR is established as a platform to ensure a balanced religious development in the State, providing support for racial and interfaith harmony and unity. Upon its formation in 2017, the State Government has approved RM15.0 million to assist 77 churches, temples and other non-Islamic religious groups in the State to construct and repair their buildings. UNIFOR has also received 82 applications from various religious groups for the construction and repair of the buildings through the respective state assemblymen for their distribution to the respective areas. Apart from that, a total of RM34 million has been approved benefiting 235 houses of worship in 2018.

The Sarawak Government underlined its commitment to taking care of the needs and development of other religions with the approval of three acres of State land for UNIFOR office complex at Jalan Ong Tiang Swee that is soon to be constructed, further reflecting the State Government's policy of inclusiveness for Sarawak. The State Government has also approved another 15 new contribution-based position (JBC) posts in addition to the 17 earlier JBC posts for UNIFOR. This is to strengthen the functions and capacity of UNIFOR in order to be able to play its roles effectively.

Since its establishment, UNIFOR has organised numerous activities that bring together many religious groups. Among them are the Three National Day Prayers featuring all Churches and other interfaith groups (Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Bahá'í) that involved 2,450 participants; briefing by UNIFOR to all Churches and interfaith leaders (Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Bahá'í) on the role of UNIFOR; briefing by the Association of Churches Sarawak during a visit from the Selangor Islamic Religious Department; Harmony Walk 2017 which saw the participation of Islamic, Christianity and many other religious groups in Sarawak; and Christmas Parade 2017 by all Churches throughout the State. All these activities demonstrate Sarawak as a model state in Malaysia in terms of its commitment in the preservation and strengthening of racial unity and religious harmony.



Source: Sarawak Voice, 2018



# SARAWAK CABINET MEMBERS

## ADUN'S



**YANG AMAT BERTHORMAT DATUK  
PATINGGI (DR) ABANG HAJI  
ABDUL RAHMAN ZOHARI BIN TUN  
DATUK ABANG HAJI OPENG**

*D.P., D.A., P.N.B.S., J.B.S.*

**CHIEF MINISTER  
MINISTER FOR FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING  
MINISTER FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES**



**YB DATUK AMAR DOUGLAS  
UGGAH EMBAS**

*D.A., P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K.*

**DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
SECOND MINISTER FOR FINANCE  
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE,  
NATIVE LAND AND  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



**YB TAN SRI DATUK AMAR DR  
JAMES JEMUT ANAK MASING**

*D.A., P.S.M., P.N.B.S., P.B.S.*

**DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE  
& PORTS DEVELOPMENT**



**YB DATUK AMAR HAJI AWANG  
TENGAH BIN ALI HASSAN**

*D.A., P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., A.M.N.*

**DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER  
SECOND MINISTER FOR URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE  
AND INDUSTRY, INDUSTRIAL TERMINAL  
AND ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT**

## Sarawak Cabinet Members



**YB DATO SRI MICHAEL  
MANYIN ANAK JAWONG**  
*P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., A.M.N., P.P.T.,  
P.P.D. (EMAS)*

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION,  
SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH



**YB DATO SRI HAJAH  
FATIMAH ABDULLAH**  
*P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K.*

MINISTER FOR WELFARE,  
COMMUNITY WELLBEING,  
WOMEN, FAMILY AND  
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



**YB DATO SRI PROF.DR  
SIM KUI HIAN**  
*P.N.B.S., P.J.N.*

MINISTER FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING



**YB DATO SRI DR  
STEPHEN RUNDI  
ANAK UTOM**

*P.N.B.S., P.J.N., A.B.S.*  
MINISTER FOR UTILITIES



**YB DATUK HAJI TALIB  
BIN ZULPILIP**

*P.G.B.K., P.B.K., P.P.B.,  
P.P.D., P.P.S.*

MINISTER IN THE CHIEF  
MINISTER'S  
DEPARTMENT (INTEGRITY  
AND OMBUDSMAN)



**YB DATUK HAJI ABDUL  
KARIM RAHMAN  
HAMZAH**

*P.G.B.K., P.B.S.*

MINISTER FOR TOURISM,  
ARTS AND CULTURE  
MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND  
SPORTS



**YB DATUK LEE KIM  
SHIN**

*P.J.N., K.M.N., P.B.S., P.P.B.,  
B.B.S.*

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

## Assistant Ministers



**YB DATUK JOHN SIKIE ANAK  
TAYAI**

*P.J.N., P.B.S., P.B.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER IN THE CHIEF  
MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT  
(NATIVE LAWS AND CUSTOMS)



**YB DATUK HAJI MOHD  
NARODEN BIN HAJI MAJAIS**

*P.G.B.K., P.B.S.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
ENTREPRENEUR AND  
SME DEVELOPMENT



**YB DATUK FRANCIS HARDEN  
ANAK HOLLIS**

*P.G.B.K., P.B.S., A.B.S.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
COMMUNITY WELLBEING



**YB DATUK HAJI JULAIHI BIN  
HAJI NARAWI**

*P.G.B.K., P.B.S., K.M.N., P.P.D..*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND PORTS  
DEVELOPMENT



**YB DATUK DR JERIP ANAK  
SUSIL**

*P.G.B.K., A.M.N.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
TRANSPORT



**YB DATUK LIWAN LAGANG**

*P.J.N., P.P.N., K.M.N., J.B.S.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
UTILITIES (RURAL ELECTRICITY)

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**YB PUAN HAJAH ROSEY BINTI  
HAJI YUNUS**

*J.B.K., P.P.B., P.P.S., P.B.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
AND  
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



**YB DATUK HAJI LEN TALIF  
SALLEH**

*D.J.B.S., P.B.K., P.P.B.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR URBAN  
PLANNING, LAND ADMINISTRATION  
AND ENVIRONMENT



**YB DATUK ROLAND SAGAH  
WEE INN**

*P.G.B.K., J.B.K., P.B.S.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR NATIVE  
LAND  
DEVELOPMENT



**YB DATUK DR HAJI ABDUL  
RAHMAN BIN HAJI JUNAIDI**

*P.G.B.K., J.B.S., A.B.S.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER IN THE CHIEF  
MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT (ISLAMIC  
AFFAIRS AND COMMISSION OF  
KUCHING NORTH)  
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR UTILITIES  
(WATER SUPPLY)



**YB DATUK HAJAH SHARIFAH  
HASIDAH BINTI SAYEED  
AMAN GHAZALI**

*P.G.B.K., P.T.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER IN THE CHIEF  
MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT  
(LAW, STATE-FEDERAL RELATIONS  
AND PROJECT MONITORING)



**YB DATUK MALCOM MUSSEN  
ANAK LAMOH**

*P.G.B.K., P.B.S., P.T.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT

## Assistant Ministers



**YB DATUK DR HAJI ABDUL  
RAHMAN BIN HAJI ISMAIL**

*P.G.B.K., A.B.S., P.T.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
AGRICULTURE



**YB DR HAJI ANNUAR BIN  
RAPAE**

*J.B.S., P.T.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR  
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HOUSING  
AND PUBLIC HEALTH



**YB DATU DR PENGUANG  
MANGGIL**

*D.J.B.S., K.M.N., P.P.C., P.P.B.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT



**YB DATUK SNOWDAN LAWAN**

*P.G.B.K., A.M.N., P.T.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR YOUTH  
AND SPORTS



**YB ENCIK ABDULLAH BIN  
HAJI SAIDOL**

*J.B.K., P.T.E.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER IN THE CHIEF  
MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT  
(CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND  
SARAWAK PUBLIC COMMUNICATION  
UNIT)



**YB DATUK SEBASTIAN TING  
CHIEW YEW**

*P.J.N., D.I.M.P., A.B.S.*

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR TOURISM,  
ARTS AND CULTURE



*First Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Eighteenth Sarawak State  
Legislative Assembly Opening Ceremony*



## Members of the Sarawak State Legislative Assembly



**YB DATO RANUM ANAK MINA**  
N.1 OPAR



**YB DATO HENRY HARRY ANAK JINEP**  
N.2 TASIK BIRU



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Hanisah Abdullah  
Zahari Bin Bolhi  
Noraisah Binti Ahmad

### DEPUTY SPEAKER OFFICE

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Katheline Anak Killah  
Mohamad Zailani Bin Junaidi  
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Lukas Jammany Anak Kated  
Hazrin Syah Bin Hamzah  
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Dayang Nazira Binti Abang  
Martaza

### CORPORATE COMMUNICATION DIVISION

Nur Azira Binti Abdul Kadir  
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Noria Binti Suut  
Nurhaffizah Abdullah  
Tracy Lyana Anak Bana  
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### RESEARCH & RESOURCE CENTRE UNIT

Rabiah Binti Abdul Kadir  
Hasfarini Binti Hassim

### PUBLICATION UNIT

Aisha Parveen Binti Badron  
Siti Halimah Binti Mohd Nawawi

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Abang Mohammad Adib Bin Abang  
Sallehaddin

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Sharifah Shazzea Binti Wan Akil

### PRACTICAL STUDENTS

Asma Syafiqah Binti Jamal (SCOPE)  
Hasniza Binti Kanchil (SCOPE)  
Mazz Mubarak (SCOPE)  
Nur Sheila Chee Binti Mudin Chee (SCOPE)  
Nur Aisyah Eiryeza Binti Sabri Waini (UiTM)

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### MACE ILLUSTRATOR

Asma Syahida Binti Jamal

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Unit Komunikasi Awam Sarawak (UKAS)  
Utusan Borneo



**THE LEGISLATURE**



Sarawak State Legislative Assembly,  
Petra Jaya, 93502 Kuching,  
Sarawak, Malaysia.



082-441955



082-440628



duns@sarawak.gov.my



<https://duns.sarawak.gov.my>