



S A R A W A K

PENYATA RASMI PERSIDANGAN DEWAN UNDANGAN NEGERI

Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Official Reports and Debates

MESYUARAT PERTAMA BAGI PENGGAL KEEMPAT

First Meeting of the Fourth Session

19 – 28 MEI 2025

DEWAN UNDANGAN NEGERI SARAWAK KESEMBILAN BELAS

Nineteenth Sarawak State Legislative Assembly

SELASA

20 MEI 2025

(22 ZULKAEDAH 1446H)

KUCHING

Peringatan untuk Ahli Dewan:

Pembetulan yang dicadangkan oleh Ahli Dewan hendaklah disampaikan secara bertulis kepada Setiausaha Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak tidak lewat daripada **14 hari selepas persidangan**.

KANDUNGAN

1.0	BACAAN PERISYTIHARAN MESYUARAT.....	1
2.0	PEMASYHURAN DARIPADA TUAN SPEAKER.....	1
3.0	PERTANYAAN-PERTANYAAN BAGI JAWAPAN-JAWAPAN LISAN	
	(1) Projek Rumah Spektra Permata RPR Pusa.....	1
	(2) Upgrading of Bukit Lima Swimming Pool.....	2
	(3) Taraf Ginturong.....	3
	(4) Projek Bekalan Air High-level Water Tank (HLT 1 dan HLT 2).....	4
	(5) Projek Micro Algae.....	5
	(6) Phase 1 of the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) Project.....	6
	(7) Poverty Issue in Sarawak.....	7
	(8) Penamatan Projek Upper Baram Forest Area Project (UBFA).....	8
	(9) Penanaman Padi di Bahagian Limbang.....	10
	(10) Current Port Master Plan.....	11
	(11) & (50) Tarif Baharu oleh Pentadbiran Amerika Syarikat.....	11
	(13) Yayasan Sarawak International School di Jepak.....	13
4.0	RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA	
4.1	<u>Supplementary Supply (2024) Bill, 2025</u> Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas).....	14
4.2	<u>Supplementary Supply (2025) Bill, 2025</u> Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas).....	15
4.3	<u>Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025</u> Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 20 Tarat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn).....	15
4.4	<u>Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025</u> Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan).....	15
4.5	<u>Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025</u> Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian).....	15
4.6	<u>Infrastructure Development Trust Fund (Dissolution) Bill, 2025</u> Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas).....	16

5.0 RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KEDUA

Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 20 Tarat

(YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn)..... 16

[Perbahasan oleh Ahli Dewan Biasa berkaitan Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025]

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| (1) | YB Encik Kennedy Chukpai Ugon – (DUN N.66 Murum)..... | 19 |
| (2) | YB Encik Royston bin Valentine – (DUN N.57 Tellian)..... | 20 |
| (3) | YB Encik Yap Yau Sin – (DUN N.12 Kota Sentosa)..... | 22 |
| (4) | YB Ir. Christopher Gira @ Gira anak Sambang – (DUN N.59 Tamin)..... | 23 |
| (5) | YB Encik Rolland Duat anak Jubin – (DUN N.48 Meluan)..... | 24 |
| (6) | YB Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor – (DUN N.28 Lingga)..... | 25 |
| (7) | YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh – (DUN N.53 Bawang Assan)..... | 26 |
| (8) | YB Dr. Simon Sinang @ Sinang anak Bada – (DUN N.21 Tebedu)..... | 28 |
| (9) | YB Encik Baru Bian – (DUN N.81 Ba’Kelalan)..... | 29 |
| (10) | YB Dato Ir. Lo Khare Chiang – (DUN N.13 Batu Kitang)..... | 31 |

6.0 RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KETIGA

Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 20 Tarat

(YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn)..... 35

7.0 RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KEDUA

Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari

(YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan)..... 35

[Perbahasan oleh Ahli Dewan Biasa berkaitan Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025]

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| (1) | YB Encik Chong Chieng Jen – (DUN N.9 Padungan)..... | 38 |
| (2) | YB Encik Safiee bin Haji Ahmad – (DUN N.43 Daro)..... | 42 |
| (3) | YB Encik Abdul Yakub bin Haji Arbi – (DUN N.58 Balingian)..... | 43 |
| (4) | YB Tuan Haji Mohamad bin Duri – (DUN N.38 Kalaka)..... | 45 |
| (5) | YB Dato Fazzrudin bin Haji Abdul Rahman – (DUN N.6 Tupong)..... | 46 |
| (6) | YB Encik Lidam anak Assan – (DUN N.62 Katibas)..... | 47 |
| (7) | YB Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor – (DUN N.28 Lingga)..... | 48 |
| (8) | YB Encik Lidam anak Assan – (DUN N.62 Katibas)..... | 50 |
| (9) | YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek – (DUN N.51 Bukit Assek)..... | 51 |
| (10) | YB Encik Rolland Duat anak Jubin – (DUN N.48 Meluan)..... | 52 |
| (11) | YB Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang – (DUN N.61 Pelagus)..... | 54 |
| (12) | YB Encik Yap Yau Sin – (DUN N.12 Kota Sentosa)..... | 56 |
| (13) | YB Ir. Christopher Gira @ Gira anak Sambang – (DUN N.59 Tamin)..... | 57 |
| (14) | YB Dato Ir. Lo Khare Chiang – (DUN N.13 Batu Kitang)..... | 58 |
| (15) | YB Dato Mohd Chee bin Kadir – (DUN N.40 Kabong)..... | 59 |
| (16) | YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh – (DUN N.53 Bawang Assan)..... | 60 |

8.0 RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KETIGA

Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari
(YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan).....

63

9.0 RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KEDUA

Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.14 Batu Kawah
(YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian).....

63

[Perbahasan oleh Ahli Dewan Biasa berkaitan Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025]

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| (1) | YB Encik Yap Yau Sin – (DUN N.12 Kota Sentosa)..... | 64 |
| (2) | YB Puan Violet Yong Wui Wui – (DUN N.10 Pending)..... | 65 |
| (3) | YB Encik Nicholas Kudi anak Jantai – (DUN N.64 Baleh)..... | 66 |
| (4) | YB Encik Johnny Pang Leong Ming – (DUN N.68 Tanjong Batu)..... | 67 |
| (5) | YB Datuk Hamzah bin Haji Brahimi – (DUN N.17 Stakan)..... | 68 |
| (6) | YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek – (DUN N.51 Bukit Assek)..... | 69 |
| (7) | YB Dato Ir Lo Khere Chiang – (DUN N.13 Batu Kitang)..... | 69 |
| (8) | YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh – (DUN N.53 Bawang Assan)..... | 70 |

10.0 RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KETIGA

Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.14 Batu Kawah
(YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian).....

73

11.0 PENANGGUHAN MESYUARAT..... 73

SARAWAK
DEWAN UNDANGAN NEGERI SARAWAK KESEMBILAN BELAS

Penyata Rasmi

MESYUARAT PERTAMA BAGI PENGAL KEEMPAT

Selasa, 20 Mei 2025

Dewan bermesyuarat di Petra Jaya, Kuching pada pukul 9.06 pagi

HADIR

Bil.	Nama	Konstituensi
1.	Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Asfia bin Awang Nasar P.S.M., D.A., P.N.B.S., D.S.A.P., D.I.M.P., P.B.K., P.C.E. (Emas) <i>Speaker Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak</i>	
2.	Yang Berhormat Dato Haji Idris bin Haji Buang P.S.B.S., D.I.M.P., A.M.N., P.B.S., A.B.S., P.C.D., P.J.P.N., P.T.E. <i>Timbalan Speaker Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak</i>	<i>N.16 Muara Tuang</i>
3.	Yang Amat Berhormat Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg D.P., P.M.N., D.A., P.N.B.S., J.B.S., P.C.E., P.S.N.B., S.P.D.K. <i>Premier Sarawak</i> <i>Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru</i> <i>Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar</i> <i>Menteri Tenaga dan Kelestarian Alam Sekitar</i>	<i>N.26 Gedong</i>
4.	Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas D.A., P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., P.C.E. <i>Timbalan Premier Sarawak</i> <i>Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua</i> <i>Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan</i>	<i>N.37 Bukit Saban</i>
5.	Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan D.A., P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., A.M.N. <i>Timbalan Premier Sarawak</i> <i>Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua</i> <i>Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa, Industri dan Pelaburan</i>	<i>N.82 Bukit Sari</i>
6.	Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian D.A., P.N.B.S., P.J.N., P.B.E. <i>Timbalan Premier Sarawak</i> <i>Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan</i>	<i>N.14 Batu Kawah</i>
7.	Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Hajah Fatimah Abdullah P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., P.C.E. <i>Menteri Pembangunan Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Kesejahteraan Komuniti</i>	<i>N.56 Dalat</i>
8.	Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Dr Stephen Rundi anak Utom P.N.B.S., P.J.N., A.B.S., P.B.E., P.C.E. <i>Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah</i>	<i>N.69 Kemena</i>

9. Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah
P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., P.B.S., P.B.E.
Menteri Pelancongan, Industri Kreatif dan Seni Persembahan
Menteri Belia, Sukan dan Pembangunan Usahawan N.15 Asajaya
10. Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Lee Kim Shin
P.N.B.S., P.J.N., K.M.N., P.B.S., P.P.B., B.B.S., P.B.E.
Menteri Pengangkutan N.75 Senadin
11. Yang Berhormat Dato Sri John Sikie anak Tayai
P.N.B.S., P.J.N., P.B.S., P.B.E.
Menteri di Jabatan Premier N.60 Kakus
12. Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Haji Julaihi bin Haji Narawi
P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., P.B.S., K.M.N., P.P.D., P.B.E.
Menteri Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi N.27 Sebuyau
13. Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn
P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., J.B.K., P.B.S., P.B.E.
Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat N.20 Tarat
14. Yang Berhormat Datuk Gerawat Gala
P.G.B.K., P.S.B.S., P.B.K.
Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Buruh, Imigresen dan Pemantauan Projek) N.78 Mulu
15. Yang Berhormat Datuk Francis Harden anak Hollis
P.G.B.K., P.B.S., A.B.S., P.B.E.
Timbalan Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat (Pembangunan Bakat) N.32 Simanggang
16. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Jerip anak Susil
P.G.B.K., A.M.N., P.B.E.
Timbalan Menteri Pengangkutan (Penerbangan dan Jalan Raya) N.19 Mambong
17. Yang Berhormat Datuk Liwan Lagang
P.J.N., P.P.N., K.M.N., J.B.S., P.B.E.
Timbalan Menteri Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi (Telekomunikasi) N.65 Belaga
18. Yang Berhormat Datuk Hajah Rosey binti Haji Yunus
P.G.B.K., J.B.K., P.P.B., P.P.S., P.T.E., P.B.E.
Timbalan Menteri Pembangunan Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Kesejahteraan Komuniti (Pembangunan Wanita dan Kanak-Kanak) N.71 Bekenu
19. Yang Berhormat Datuk Haji Len Talif Salleh
P.G.B.K., D.J.B.S., P.B.K., P.P.B.
Timbalan Menteri Perancangan Bandar, Pentadbiran Tanah dan Alam Sekitar N.41 Kuala Rajang
20. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Junaidi
P.G.B.K., J.B.S., A.B.S., P.B.E.
Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Penyelaras Projek untuk Agensi Pembangunan Wilayah, Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara dan Hal Ehwal Islam) N.4 Pantai Damai

21. Yang Berhormat Datuk Hajah Sharifah Hasidah binti Sayeed Aman Ghazali
P.G.B.K., P.T.E., J.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Undang-undang, MA63 dan Hubungan Negeri-Persekutuan) N.7 Samariang

22. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Malcolm Mussen anak Lamoh
P.G.B.K., P.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa, Industri dan Pelaburan N.34 Batang Ai

23. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Ismail
P.G.B.K., A.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi & Pembangunan Wilayah (Industri Makanan) N.79 Bukit Kota

24. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Haji Annuar bin Rapa'ee
P.G.B.K., J.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat (Pengajian Tinggi dan Inovasi) N.55 Nangka

25. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Penguang Manggil
P.G.B.K., D.J.B.S., K.M.N., P.P.C., P.P.B., P.P.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (Kerajaan Tempatan) N.76 Marudi

26. Yang Berhormat Datuk Abdullah bin Haji Saidol
P.G.B.K., K.M.N., J.B.K., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Hal Ehwal Korporat dan Unit Komunikasi Awam Sarawak) N.42 Semop

27. Yang Berhormat Datuk Sebastian Ting Chiew Yew
P.J.N., D.I.M.P., A.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri Pelancongan, Industri Kreatif dan Seni Persembahan (Pelancongan) N.73 Piasau

28. Yang Berhormat Datuk Ir. Aidel bin Lariwoo
P.G.B.K., P.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan (Pembangunan Infrastruktur) N.24 Sadong Jaya

29. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Ripin bin Lamat
P.G.B.K., J.B.K., K.M.N., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Belia, Sukan dan Pembangunan Usahawan (Pembangunan Usahawan) N.72 Lambir

30. Yang Berhormat Datuk Dr Haji Hazland bin Abang Hipni
P.G.B.K., K.M.N., J.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Tenaga dan Kelestarian Alam Sekitar N.5 Demak Laut

31. Yang Berhormat Datuk Maclaine Ben @ Martin Ben
P.G.B.K., J.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi & Pembangunan Wilayah (Komoditi & Pembangunan Wilayah) N.22 Kedup

32. Yang Berhormat Datuk Ricky @ Mohammad Razi bin Sitam
P.G.B.K., K.M.N., J.B.S., P.T.E.
Timbalan Menteri Pembangunan Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Kesejahteraan Komuniti (Kesejahteraan Komuniti) N.35 Saribas
33. Yang Berhormat Dato Henry Harry anak Jinep
P.S.B.S., A.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri Pengangkutan (Sungai dan Laut) N.2 Tasik Biru
34. Yang Berhormat Dato' Murshid DiRaja Dr Juanda bin Jaya
P.G.B.K., DATO' MURSHID DIRAJA, S.S.P.
Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Integriti dan Ombudsman) N.44 Jemoreng
35. Yang Berhormat Dato Gerald Rentap Jabu
P.S.B.S., A.B.S., P.P.N., J.B.K.
Timbalan Menteri Belia, Sukan dan Pembangunan Usahawan (Pembangunan Belia dan Sukan) N.36 Layar
36. Yang Berhormat Dato Majang anak Renggi
P.S.B.S., P.B.K., A.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan (Pembangunan Pelabuhan) N.70 Samalaju
37. Yang Berhormat Datuk Jefferson Jamit anak Unyat
P.G.B.K., B.B.S., P.B.S., K.M.N., J.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Undang-undang dan Adat Bumiputera) N.63 Bukit Goram
38. Yang Berhormat Datuk Michael Tiang Ming Tee
P.G.B.K., P.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (Kesihatan Awam dan Perumahan) N.54 Pelawan
39. Yang Berhormat Dato Ibrahim bin Baki
A.B.S., J.B.S., P.S.B.S.
Timbalan Menteri Utiliti (Sarawak Energy Berhad dan PETROS) N.8 Satok
40. Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Tiong King Sing
P.J.N., P.N.B.S., D.P.M.K., D.P.M.K., S.S.S.A., D.S.S.A., J.P. N.52 Dudong
41. Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Huang Tiong Sii
P.G.B.K., D.I.M.P., S.S.A.P. N.45 Repok
42. Yang Berhormat Dato Fazzrudin bin Haji Abdul Rahman
P.S.B.S., J.B.K., P.B.S. N.6 Tupong
43. Yang Berhormat Tan Sri William Mawan anak Ikom
P.S.M., P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., A.M.N., P.B.S., P.P.D. (Emas) N.47 Pakan
44. Yang Berhormat Datuk Mong anak Dagang
P.G.B.K., J.M.N., P.B.S., P.P.D., P.B.K., P.B.E. N.31 Bukit Begunan
45. Yang Berhormat Dato Paulus Palu Gumbang
P.S.B.S., A.M.N., P.B.S., J.B.K., P.T.E. N.80 Batu Danau
46. Yang Berhormat Dato Dennis Ngau
P.S.B.S., J.B.S., P.B.S., P.T.E., B.B.S. N.77 Telang Usan

47.	Yang Berhormat Tuan Haji Razaili bin Haji Gapor P.T.E., P.B.S.	<i>N.29 Beting Maro</i>
48.	Yang Berhormat Encik Chong Chieng Jen	<i>N.9 Padungan</i>
49.	Yang Berhormat Puan Violet Yong Wui Wui	<i>N.10 Pending</i>
50.	Yang Berhormat Encik See Chee How	<i>N.11 Batu Lintang</i>
51.	Yang Berhormat Datuk Ding Kuong Hiing P.J.N., A.B.S.	<i>N.46 Meradong</i>
52.	Yang Berhormat Dato Ir. Lo Khare Chiang P.S.B.S., B.B.S., J.B.K.	<i>N.13 Batu Kitang</i>
53.	Yang Berhormat Dato Mohd Chee bin Kadir P.S.B.S., A.B.S., P.B.S., P.J.P.N., J.B.S.	<i>N.40 Kabong</i>
54.	Yang Berhormat Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang A.M.N., K.M.N., J.B.S.	<i>N.61 Pelagus</i>
55.	Yang Berhormat Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh P.N.B.S., P.G.B.K., A.B.S., P.C.E.	<i>N.53 Bawang Assan</i>
56.	Yang Berhormat Encik Miro anak Simuh P.B.S.	<i>N.18 Serembu</i>
57.	Yang Berhormat Encik John anak Ilus P.B.S., A.P.S.	<i>N.23 Bukit Semuja</i>
58.	Yang Berhormat Encik Awla bin Dris P.B.S., A.B.S.	<i>N.25 Simunjan</i>
59.	Yang Berhormat Ir. Christopher Gira @ Gira anak Sambang P.B.K.	<i>N.59 Tamin</i>
60.	Yang Berhormat Encik Rolland Duat anak Jubin	<i>N.48 Meluan</i>
61.	Yang Berhormat Encik Abdul Yakub bin Haji Arbi B.B.S., A.B.S., K.M.N., J.B.K.	<i>N.58 Balingian</i>
62.	Yang Berhormat Encik Safiee bin Haji Ahmad J.B.K., P.P.B.	<i>N.43 Daro</i>
63.	Yang Berhormat Encik Kennedy Chukpai Ugon J.B.S., P.P.N., A.B.S.	<i>N.66 Murum</i>
64.	Yang Berhormat Encik Allan Siden Gramong P.B.S., A.B.S.	<i>N.50 Machan</i>
65.	Yang Berhormat Datuk Hamzah bin Haji Brahim A.M.N., P.M.W.	<i>N.17 Stakan</i>
66.	Yang Berhormat Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor P.B.S.	<i>N.28 Lingga</i>

67.	Yang Berhormat Dr Simon Sinang @ Sinang anak Bada A.B.S., P.B.S., K.M.N.	N.21 Tebedu
68.	Yang Berhormat Encik Billy anak Sujang P.B.S., P.P.B.	N.1 Opar
69.	Yang Berhormat Encik Azizul Annuar bin Pehin Sri Haji Adenan P.B.S.	N.3 Tanjong Datu
70.	Yang Berhormat Encik Yap Yau Sin P.B.S., K.M.N.	N.12 Kota Sentosa
71.	Yang Berhormat Tuan Haji Mohamad bin Duri P.B.K., A.B.S.	N.38 Kalaka
72.	Yang Berhormat Encik Johnichal Rayong anak Ngipa J.B.S., P.T.E.	N.33 Engkilili
73.	Yang Berhormat Encik Baru Bian	N.81 Ba'Kelalan
74.	Yang Berhormat Encik Friday anak Belik A.B.K., P.P.S., P.P.B., P.B.K., P.P.C.	N.39 Krian
75.	Yang Berhormat Encik Anyi anak Jana P.B.K.	N.49 Ngemah
76.	Yang Berhormat Encik Chieng Jin Ek P.B.S.	N.51 Bukit Assek
77.	Yang Berhormat Encik Royston bin Valentine J.B.K., A.B.S.	N.57 Tellian
78.	Yang Berhormat Encik Lidam anak Assan P.B.S.	N.62 Katibas
79.	Yang Berhormat Encik Nicholas Kudi anak Jantai P.B.S.	N.64 Baleh
80.	Yang Berhormat Encik Johnny Pang Leong Ming P.B.S.	N.68 Tanjong Batu
81.	Yang Berhormat Encik Iskandar bin Turkee	N.67 Jepak

TIDAK HADIR

(Kebenaran di bawah Peraturan Mesyuarat 81)

Bil.	Nama	Konstituensi
1.	Yang Berhormat Datuk Snowdan Lawan P.G.B.K., A.M.N., P.T.E. <i>Timbalan Menteri Pelancongan, Industri Kreatif dan Seni Persembahan (Industri Kreatif dan Seni Persembahan)</i>	N.30 Balai Ringin
2.	Yang Berhormat Encik Adam Yii Siew Sang A.B.S.	N.74 Pujut

TURUT HADIR

1. Encik Nur Azhar bin Bujang
Setiausaha Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak
2. Encik Abang Mohammad Adib bin Abang Sallehadin
Pemangku Timbalan Setiausaha Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak
3. ASP. Mohd Nur Fitri bin Mohd Idrus
Bentara Mesyuarat
4. Inspektor Eldino Erick Joss
Bentara Mesyuarat
5. Encik Encik Nizle anak Junep
Bentara Mesyuarat
6. Encik Muhaimin Naqib bin Narudin
Bentara Mesyuarat
7. Encik Bryan Hansen anak Wennedy
Bentara Mesyuarat
8. Encik Abang Mohd Azamuddin bin Abang Yahya
Bentara Mesyuarat

PETUGAS PERSIDANGAN

PEGAWAI UNDANG-UNDANG DAN PEMBACA PRUF

1. Encik Syed Rezif Afham bin Wan Alwi *Jabatan Peguam Besar Negeri Sarawak*
2. Cik Vanessa anak Jawa *Jabatan Peguam Besar Negeri Sarawak*

PEMBACA PRUF

1. Encik Nasir bin Hamid *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Negeri Sarawak*
2. Puan Saidatul Faiqah binti Samasu *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Negeri Sarawak*

JURUTRENGKAS

1. Puan Sharlina binti Mushar *Pejabat Setiausaha Kewangan Negeri*
2. Puan Malin anak Arif *Pejabat Setiausaha Kewangan Negeri*
3. Puan Meri Sabas *Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)*
4. Puan Noorina binti Hamdan *Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)*
5. Puan Doris anak Francis Harris *Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)*
6. Puan Ratna Airnwati binti Haji Md. Junaidi *Perbadanan Pembangunan Perumahan*
7. Puan Sabtuyah binti Adeng *Perbadanan Pembangunan Perumahan*
8. Puan Nori Othman *Perbadanan Pembangunan Perumahan*
9. Puan Zuriawati binti Mohd Laili *Pustaka Negeri Sarawak*
10. Encik Mohd Alfadger bin Tuah *Pejabat Residen Bahagian Kuching*
11. Puan Dalina binti Dalil *Jabatan Kerja Raya Sarawak (JKR)*
12. Puan Siti Rabiah binti Jili *JKR Bahagian Limbang*
13. Puan Olivia Batan *Jabatan Akaun Negara Negeri Sarawak*
14. Puan Liliana Bian *Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuching*
15. Puan Noor Afifah binti Bahaudin *Kementerian Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi Sarawak*
16. Puan Dayang Duraiza binti Haji Awang Jangka *Lembaga Sumber Asli & Alam Sekitar Sarawak*
17. Puan Anieta Sylvester Pungga *Perbadanan Pembangunan Ekonomi Sarawak*
18. Puan Juliana Lugom *Perbadanan Pembangunan Ekonomi Sarawak*
19. Puan Rosemary Langub *Perbadanan Kemajuan Perusahaan Kayu Sarawak*

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|-----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 20. | Puan Leidiana binti Azahari | <i>Pejabat Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier Sarawak (Penyelaras Projek untuk Agnesi Pembangunan Wilayah, Dewan Babdaraya Kuching Utara dan Hal Ehwal Islam)</i> |
| 21. | Puan Azah Mohamad Jally | <i>Kementerian Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan Sarawak</i> |
| 22. | Puan Nur Izzatul Fatimah Abdullah | <i>Kementerian Belia, Sukan dan Pembangunan Usahawan Sarawak</i> |
| 23. | Puan Rosline anak Dominic Maon | <i>Kementerian Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat Sarawak (MEITD)</i> |
| 24. | Puan Nurhaida binti Amin | <i>Jabatan Penyiaran Kawasan Sarawak, Jabatan Penyiaran Negeri Sarawak</i> |
| 25. | Puan Valarie Jane anak Aitman | <i>Pejabat Pembangunan Persekutuan Negeri Sarawak, Unit Penyelarasan Pelaksanaan, Jabatan Perdana Menteri</i> |
| 26. | Puan Margaret anak Francis Bohui | <i>Lembaga Penyatuan dan Pemulihan Tanah Sarawak</i> |

JURURAKAM PERSIDANGAN

- | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Puan Nordiana binti Rabae | <i>Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak</i> |
| 2. | Encik Hussein bin Shuini | <i>Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak</i> |
| 3. | Encik Voon Choon Chan | <i>Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak</i> |
| 4. | Puan Siti Nazilafatullaini binti Sukri | <i>Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak</i> |
| 5. | Encik Wan Mohamad Zaki bin Wan Alias | <i>Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak</i> |

JURUCETAK

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Encik Mohd. Nor Majidi Bin Marekan | <i>Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad</i> |
| 2. | Encik Gabriel Jimmy | <i>Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad</i> |

JURUTEKNIK IT

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Encik Abang Hasmadi bin Abang Wahab | <i>SAINS</i> |
| 2. | Encik Mohamad Fadzly bin Arfan | <i>SAINS</i> |
| 3. | Encik Izzat Luqman | <i>SAINS</i> |

MESSENGER

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Encik Mohamad Zahari bin Hamden | <i>Jabatan Agama Islam Sarawak</i> |
| 2. | Encik Helmy bin Abdul Rahman | <i>Jabatan Pertanian Sarawak</i> |
| 3. | Encik Shah Riwandy Sia bin Ridzuan | <i>Jabatan Pertanian Sarawak</i> |
| 4. | Encik Mohammad Zaidi bin Rambli | <i>Jabatan Pertanian Sarawak</i> |
| 5. | Encik Lawrence Encharang | <i>Jabatan Pertanian Sarawak</i> |
| 6. | Encik Mohamed Nazeerudin bin Gulam Mohamed | <i>Kementerian Industri Makanan, Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah Sarawak</i> |
| 7. | Encik Fadillah bin Lokman | <i>Jabatan Tanah dan Survei Bahagian Kuching</i> |
| 8. | Encik Addison anak Fredrick | <i>Jabatan Tanah dan Survei Bahagian Kuching</i> |

SEKRETARIAT PERSIDANGAN DEWAN UNDANGAN NEGERI SARAWAK

1. Tuan Haji Abang Zaabar bin Abang Ballia
2. Cik Noria binti Suut
3. Puan Nur Azira binti Abdul Kadir
4. Encik Nurkhairudin bin Osen
5. Puan Rabiah binti Abdul Kadir
6. Puan Aisha Parveen binti Badron
7. Cik Genang anak Timbung
8. Puan Siti Norhiza binti Mohammad Yusri

9. Puan Hanisah Abdullah
10. Cik Siti Halimah binti Mohamad Nawawi
11. Puan Hasfarini binti Hassim
12. Cik Nurhaffizah Abdullah
13. Puan Natasha Nadia binti Mohd. Saidi
14. Puan Angela Lisa anak Mathew Linol
15. Encik Felix Aaron anak Michael
16. Puan Calista Abbie anak Sapa @ Patrick Sapa
17. Cik Sharina binti Sopian
18. Awang Mohammad Asyrul Jaya bin Awang Putra
19. Sarjan Terence anak Jayan
20. Puan Norziana binti Haji Ahmad
21. Encik Mohd Hasfia bin Abdullah
22. Puan Nur Eliana Abdullah
23. Puan Nazmah binti Darham
24. Puan Tracy Lyana anak Bana
25. Encik Mohd Zulkhairi bin Mohammad Hejemi
26. Puan Jasmine Sinja anak Robinson
27. Cik Parcelia Renyelia anak Pamg
28. Cik Nur Zafirah binti Affendy Michael
29. Puan Deidre anak Wilson
30. Encik Muhammad Elliyas bin Matali
31. Cik Siti Nur Marsitah binti Abdullah
32. Puan Nur Amira Lystiani binti Poniman
33. Encik Alwie bin Haji Ali
34. Cik Hawa binti Morsad
35. Encik Razali bin Awi
36. Puan Nora binti Atem
37. Encik Zahari bin Bolhi
38. Encik Lukas Jammany anak Kated
39. Encik Hazrin Syah bin Hamzah
40. Encik Salman bin Jaya
41. Encik Romzi bin Bujang
42. Encik Musa bin Julai
43. Puan Suraya binti Hamden
44. Puan Noraisah binti Ahmad
45. Cik Siti Zalilah binti Samsawi
46. Encik Iz Mohd. Haiqal Hakeem bin Mahamud

PELAJAR PRAKTIKAL

1. Nur Azmina Izzatulrazan binti Ibrahim
2. Mohammad Amir bin Mohammad Zamri
3. Mohamad Aswan bin Ismail

(Mesyuarat dimulakan pada pukul 9.06 pagi)

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan mesyuarat]

DOA

PEMASYHURAN DARIPADA TUAN SPEAKER

Tuan Speaker: Bismillahirrahmannirahim. Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Selamat pagi dan Salam sejahtera. Honourable Members, under Standing Orders 12(1) and (2), the government's business shall take precedents over the private members' business and the government's business shall be set down in such order as the government thinks fit and communicated to the Secretary.

Four days, that is today, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday this week are set aside for the daily one-hour question time. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday this week shall be devoted to the debate for the Head of State's address. The Ministerial replies shall take the remaining three days of next week, that is on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, pursuant to Standing Order 69(1), I have appointed the following Honourable Members to be the Members of the Standing Orders and Selection Committee for this session:

- (a) Yang Amat Berhormat Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg;
- (b) Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas;
- (c) Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan;
- (d) Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian;
- (e) Yang Berhormat Dato Sri John Sikie anak Tayai;

and I as the Speaker, shall be the Chairman of the Committee.

Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, I have granted leave of absence under Standing Order 81 to Yang Berhormat Encik Adam Yii Siew Sang, Honourable Member for N.74 Pujut for today's sitting.

PERTANYAAN-PERTANYAAN BAGI JAWAPAN-JAWAPAN LISAN

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Tuan Haji Razaili bin Haji Gapor, Beting Maro.

YB Tuan Haji Razaili bin Haji Gapor: Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker.

*Pembuka bicara salam persidangan,
Ucapan TYT tonggak perbahasan;
SPEKTRA Permata perumahan idaman,
Soalan nombor 1 Beting Maro mohon jawapan.*

Projek Rumah Spektra Permata RPR Pusa

(1) YB Tuan Haji Razaili bin Haji Gapor bertanya kepada Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan: Kerajaan telah melulus projek rumah Spektra Permata RPR Pusa. Bilakah projek tersebut akan dilaksanakan? Berapa jumlah unit rumah yang dibina dan bila dijangka siap?

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (Kesihatan Awam dan Perumahan) (YB Datuk Michael Tiang Ming Tee): Tuan Speaker, for the information of the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Beting Maro, the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) has been allocated a ceiling of RM1.5 million by the Sarawak Government under the Rancangan Malaysia Ke-12 to carry out the submission of a revised plan, as well as the preparation of a sub-division blocking plan and survey blocking plan.

HDC has submitted a request for RM30 million allocation under the RMK-13 from the Sarawak Government-funded project for the development of infrastructure and building works for 40 units of *Rumah SPEKTRA Permata* (RSP). The construction of the infrastructure and building works are expected to be completed within 24 months from the site possession.

YB Tuan Haji Razali bin Haji Gapor: (*Supplementary Question*) Terima kasih, Timbalan Menteri di atas jawapan yang telah diberikan. Tuan Speaker, saya ada dua soalan tambahan:

- (a) What is the current status of the redevelopment of RPR Pusa?
- (b) What is the type of house and how many houses are to be built under the RPR Pusa redevelopment?

Thank you.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (Kesihatan Awam dan Perumahan) (YB Datuk Michael Tiang Ming Tee): Thank you for the two supplementary questions from the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Beting Maro. As the answer for the first question, Tuan Speaker, for the information of the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Beting Maro.

- (a) The redevelopment of the RPR Pusa was approved by the State Planning Authority (SPA) on 20th February 2024. The sub-division blocking plan was subsequently approved by the Land and Survey Department Betong on 13th March 2025; and
- (b) As for the second supplementary question, for the information of the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Beting Maro, a total of 136 units of *Rumah SPEKTRA Permata* (RSP) detached houses have been approved under the RPR Pusa redevelopment.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Chieng Jin Ek, Bukit Assek.

YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek: Thank you, Tuan Speaker, my question is no. 2.

Upgrading of Bukit Lima swimming pool

(2) YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek to ask the Minister for Youth, Sports and Entrepreneur Development: On the additional allocation of fund for the upgrading of the Bukit Lima swimming pool and the completion date?

Timbalan Menteri Belia, Sukan dan Pembangunan Usahawan (Pembangunan Belia dan Sukan) (YB Dato Gerald Rentap Jabu):

*Manuk berkukuk ari Sibü,
MYSED nyaut soalan number two.*

For the information of the Honourable Member for Bukit Assek, the Retrofitting and Covered Outdoor Learning Areas (COLA) or swimming pool for Bukit Lima Swimming Pool Sibü, Sarawak. The project was completed on the 15th of May 2024 with the project cost of RM3.497 million. The scope of the project consists of new roof with coverage of 3,883-meter square that covers the pool and grandstand area, micropiles for the foundation of 10 numbers of columns, RC footing and stump, steel columns, steel roofs TRA system and roof sheets.

My ministry has initiated the 13th Malaysian Plan (13MP) lab on 28th to 29th April 2025 in Miri. The objectives of the lab are to gather information and submission from agencies for the proposed Project under the 13th Malaysian Plan and to introduce Value at Entry (VAE) as part of the 13th Malaysian Plan project submission requirements. The Sibü Municipal Council has initiated a proposal to request for additional allocation for the Bukit Lima Swimming Pool after the completion of Retrofitting and Covered Outdoor Learning Areas (COLA) on 15th May 2024.

The Sibu Municipal Council has outline additional scope of work to add value for the current completion of the Bukit Lima Swimming pool. The scope consists of:

- (a) Lightings for night purpose, night usage;
- (b) Main roof extension for children pool and gazebo;
- (c) Scoreboard, LED Display and Control Room; and
- (d) Other associated building works.

The Sibu Municipal Council is currently preparing the paper works for the 13th Malaysian Plan and VAE submission to the ministry. Thank you.

YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek: (*Supplementary Question*) Tuan Speaker, two supplementary questions.

- (a) Is there any collaboration initiative from relevant agency in the search for the new talent in swimming? and
- (b) What strategic and sustainable programs can be introduced at this facility to ensure its continuous use and lasting benefit to the community?

Timbalan Menteri Belia, Sukan dan Pembangunan Usahawan (Pembangunan Belia dan Sukan) (YB Dato Gerald Rentap Jabu): Thank you, Member for Bukit Assek. For your information, Sibu was once a key center for producing talented and medal winning swimmers who made Sarawak proud and still is, this included people like Dieung anak Manggang and Hii Siew Siew.

The swimming development center has been set up in Sibu by the Sarawak Sports Corporation to train young talents through structured coaching and performance monitoring. The Sarawak Sport Corporation and Sarawak State Sport Council (MSN) have collaborated with associations, affiliated swimming clubs and related agencies to implement development programs such as talent and education, organizing swimming clinics, grassroots training sessions, technical training, inter-school and inter-state sport competition and providing access to qualified coaches and facilities. The goal is to identify promising young swimmers early and nurture them to structure development and pathways towards early performance to represent Sarawak and Malaysia.

For your supplementary question number two, for the information of the Honourable Member for Bukit Assek, the facilities hold significant potential to serve as a dynamic community hub through the implementation of inclusive and sustainable programs. This may include community-based wellness activities that promote healthy living alongside structured sport engagement initiative, and it may be embedding sports as a lifestyle choice. Special emphasis will also be given to active aging program to support the well-being of the senior population. Furthermore, the community swimming pool can be strategically upgraded to attract increased participation.

This will also encourage youth involvement in aquatic activities but also serve as an early talent identification platform for coaches nurturing the next generation of athletes and the grassroots. As you know, the Bukit Lima Sport Complex was built in 1963 and has been in good use and continues to be used for further sport and also recreational activities. Apart from the Bukit Lima Sport Complex, the swimming pool, there is also an indoor stadium, popular with futsal and other indoor activities and tennis court for the use of the community. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang, Pelagus.

YB Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. My question is no. 3.

Taraf Ginturong

(3) YB Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang bertanya kepada Premier Sarawak: Memandangkan begitu ramai penduduk dari luar bandar berpindah ke bandar, adakah pihak kerajaan berhasrat untuk buat pengesahan tentang (*Ginturong*) agar setaraf dengan Kampung dan Taman Perumahan?

Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Undang-undang dan Adat Bumiputera) (YB Datuk Jefferson Jamit anak Unyat): Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker, terima kasih kepada Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Pelagus. Untuk makluman Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Pelagus, kerajaan akan meneliti dan mempertimbangkan cadangan untuk mengesahkan sesuatu kawasan penempatan seperti *Ginturong* agar setaraf dengan kampung yang sah dan diiktiraf oleh kerajaan, selagi mana ianya tidak melanggar sebarang undang-undang dan peraturan sedia ada termasuklah status pemilikan tanah serta mematuhi kriteria dan syarat pewujudan jawatan Ketua Kaum yang telah ditetapkan. Sekian, terima kasih.

YB Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang: (Soalan Tambahan) Terima kasih, Yang Berhormat Timbalan Menteri. Saya ada dua soalan tambahan.

- (a) Berapakah bilangan *Ginturong* yang telah diiktiraf oleh kerajaan di Daerah Kapit? dan
- (b) Nyatakan *Ginturong* yang telah diiktiraf tersebut?

Kita mahu tahu. Terima kasih.

Timbalan Menteri di Jabatan Premier (Undang-Undang dan Adat Bumiputera)(YB Datuk Jefferson Jamit anak Unyat): Terima kasih. Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker. Terima kasih kepada YB bagi Pelagus. Untuk makluman YB bagi Pelagus, bilangan *Ginturong* yang telah diiktiraf oleh kerajaan di Daerah Kapit adalah 14 buah *Ginturong* setakat ini. Manakala, soalan tambahan yang kedua, *Ginturong* yang telah diiktiraf adalah seperti berikut:

- (a) *Ginturong* Iban Bersatu, Nanga Sebaning, Kapit;
- (b) *Ginturong* JKKK Lepong Sungai Sibau, Kapit;
- (c) *Ginturong* Lepung Panjai, Kapit;
- (d) *Ginturong* Pelajau Jaya, Bukit Goram, Kapit;
- (e) *Ginturong* Sekaban, Jalan Puan Sri Tiong, Kapit;
- (f) *Ginturong* Selepong 3 (Serogan), Kapit;
- (g) *Ginturong* Sesawa Atas, Kapit;
- (h) *Ginturong* Sesawa, Bukit Goram, Kapit;
- (i) *Ginturong* Sungai Ara, Kapit;
- (j) *Ginturong* Tatai Panglima, Kapit;
- (k) *Ginturong* Sawang A, Kapit;
- (l) *Ginturong* Sawang B, Kapit;
- (m) *Ginturong* Ulu Trusa, Kapit; dan akhir sekali
- (n) *Ginturong* Terusa, Kapit.

Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Datuk Hamzah bin Haji Brahim, Stakan.

YB Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang: Tuan Speaker. Soalan saya no. 4.

Projek Bekalan Air Highlevel Water Tank (HLT 1 Dan HLT 2)

(4) YB Datuk Hamzah bin Haji Brahim bertanya kepada Menteri Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi: Bilakah Projek Bekalan Air *High-level Water Tank* (HLT 1 dan HLT 2) di Taman Samarindah akan bermula dan apakah status terkini daripada pihak kementerian berkenaan pelaksanaan projek tersebut?

Timbalan Menteri Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi (Telekomunikasi) (YB Datuk Liwan Lagang): Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker dan terima kasih, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Stakan yang tidak jemu-jemu mengaju dan juga ingin menyelesaikan permasalahan air di kawasan beliau. Terima kasih, Yang Berhormat.

Untuk makluman Yang Berhormat bagi Stakan, pertapakan bagi pembinaan tapak tangki aras tinggi di kawasan Samarindah telah diluluskan. Berita baik. Pada 7 April 2025 dan kini dalam peringkat pengambilan balik tanah dan tender bagi projek ini dijangka akan dipelawa pada suku ketiga tahun 2025.

YB Datuk Hamzah bin Haji Brahim: (*Soalan Tambahan*) Terima kasih, Timbalan Menteri. Tuan Speaker, saya ada dua soalan tambahan.

- (a) Berapakah kapasiti tangki air aras tinggi yang akan dibina dalam kawasan Taman Samarindah? dan
- (b) Berapa lamakah tempoh pelaksanaan projek ini?

Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker.

Timbalan Menteri Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi (Telekomunikasi) (YB Datuk Liwan Lagang): Terima kasih, YB bagi Stakan. Untuk soalan tambahan no. 1, dua tangki air aras tinggi yang akan dibina di kawasan Samarindah masing-masing berkapasiti 4.5 juta liter. Manakala, tempoh pelaksanaan projek ini dijangka akan mengambil masa 18 bulan. Terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Friday anak Belik, Krian.

YB Encik Friday anak Belik: Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker. Soalan saya no. 5.

Projek Micro-Algae

(5) YB Encik Friday anak Belik bertanya kepada Menteri Tenaga dan Kelestarian Alam Sekitar: Apakah cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi oleh Projek *Micro-Algae* di Sarawak?

Timbalan Menteri Tenaga dan Kelestarian Alam Sekitar (YB Datuk Dr Haji Hazland bin Abang Hipni): Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker dan terima kasih Yang Berhormat bagi Krian. Hidup di dunia ini memang penuh dengan cabaran. Tidak terasing juga Projek *Micro-Algae* yang mempunyai *at least* tiga cabaran. Satu, perubahan cuaca. Dua, pelaburan yang tinggi kerana ianya memerlukan teknologi yang tinggi, *AI sensor* untuk mengganti tenaga manual dalam pengendalian dalam proses penghasilan *micro-algae* yang berkualiti tinggi dan cabaran lain adalah untuk meningkatkan pengeluaran ataupun *upscaling* untuk memenuhi permintaan dunia bagi bahan mentah *bio* dan ataupun *bio pitstop*. Pembolehubah yang boleh terjejas adalah seperti kekuatan cahaya matahari, pH air, suhu dan konsentrasi, karbon dioksida, *turbulents* air, nutrisi di dalam air dan saliniti ataupun kemasinan air. Terima kasih.

YB Encik Friday anak Belik: (*Soalan Tambahan*) Terima kasih, Yang Berhormat Timbalan Menteri di atas jawapan. Tuan Speaker, saya ada dua soalan tambahan.

- (a) Bagaimanakah syarikat tempatan Sarawak mendapat manfaat daripada industri *micro-algae* yang semakin berkembang di negeri ini? dan
- (b) Adakah Kerajaan Negeri mempunyai perancangan untuk meneroka sumber lain sebagai bahan api penerbangan mampan ataupun SAF selain daripada *micro-algae*?

Timbalan Menteri Tenaga dan Kelestarian Alam Sekitar (YB Datuk Dr Haji Hazland bin Abang Hipni): Terima kasih Yang Berhormat bagi Krian. Manfaat yang didapati oleh syarikat tempatan Sarawak daripada industri *micro-algae* semakin berkembang. Syarikat dan individu tempatan Sarawak boleh menyertai industri *micro-algae* dengan:

- (a) Melabur dalam penanaman dan penuaian *micro-algae*;
- (b) Menceburi pengeluaran minyak alga mentah;

- (c) Membangunkan biojisim alga untuk pelbagai produk seperti makanan haiwan, produk nutraseutikal dan farmaseutikal. Walau bagaimanapun, perlu ditekankan bahawa skala ekonomi yang sesuai untuk pelaburan projek adalah penting untuk menjadikannya berdaya maju dan lestari.

Untuk soalan kedua, perancangan untuk meneroka sumber lain sebagai bahan api penerbangan mampan (SAF) atau *Sustainable Aviation Fuel* selain daripada *micro-algae* sedang dijalan oleh SEDC Energy Sdn. Bhd. dengan mengkaji dan meneroka sumber-sumber lain yang bersesuaian untuk tujuan pengeluaran bahan api penerbangan mampan (SAF). Antara sumber lain yang boleh dijadikan pilihan ialah minyak masak terpakai, rumpai laut, sisa pertanian dan biojisim.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik See Chee How, Batu Lintang.

YB Encik See Chee How: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. My question is no. 6.

Phase 1 of the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) Project

(6) YB Encik See Chee How to ask the Minister for Transport: What is the progress of the Phase 1 of the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) project involves the Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) and when will the three lines be coming into service respectively?

Timbalan Menteri Pengangkutan (Penerbangan dan Jalan Raya) (YB Datuk Dr Jerip anak Susil): Thank you, Tuan Speaker and thank you Member for Batu Lintang. For the information of the Honourable Member for Batu Lintang, as of April 2025, the overall progress of the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) Phase 1 Project stands at 29.89% that is the actual target compared to 33.86% as planned, with a variance of -3.9%. The operations of KUTS Phase 1 will be carried out in stages, with the first section under the Blue Line from Rembus to Riveria, now anticipated to begin in the fourth quarter of 2026. This is later than the initially targeted date due to construction delays. The full operation of the entire KUTS Phase 1 Project is expected to commence in 2028.

YB Encik See Chee How: (*Supplementary Question*) Thank you, the Honourable Deputy Minister. I have two supplementary questions.

- (a) Where is the location of the at-grade and elevated ART station within the Batu Lintang constituency along the ART route my constituency from Jalan Setia Raja, Jalan Wan Alwi through Batu Lintang to Sarawak General Hospital? and
- (b) How many Transit Signal Priority (TSP) junctions are planned in the Batu Lintang area and where are there located?

Thank you.

Timbalan Menteri Pengangkutan (Penerbangan dan Jalan Raya) (YB Datuk Dr Jerip anak Susil): Tuan Speaker, thank you and thank you to the Honourable Member for Batu Lintang. The entire stretch of Jalan Wan Alwi which is within the constituency of Batu Lintang is constructed as an elevated alignment of our elevated land with two elevated stations; one is in front of the Viva City Megamall and the other near the Kuching Lodge School. Meanwhile, there will be one station located at SM 12, (SM means Samarahan Station) Batu Lintang in front of JKR Divisional Office with an elevated design for Batu Lintang area.

As for the second question, there will be one Transit Signal Priority (TSP) at Jalan Batu Lintang located at the Jalan Bampfylde – Jalan Batu Lintang Traffic Light Junction near the Kuching Water Board. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Datuk Mong anak Dagang, Bukit Begunan.

YB Datuk Mong anak Dagang: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. My question is no. 7.

Tuan Speaker: Question no. 7.

Poverty Issue in Sarawak

(7) YB Datuk Mong anak Dagang to ask the Minister for Women, Early Childhood and Community Wellbeing Development: What are the programmes undertaken by the Sarawak Government to tackle poverty issue in Sarawak?

Menteri Pembangunan Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Kesejahteraan Komuniti (YB Dato Sri Hajah Fatimah Abdullah): Thank you, Tuan Speaker. For the information of the Honourable Member for Bukit Begunan, the Sarawak Government addresses the poverty issues in the state in a holistically manner, through various and varieties of programmes implemented by different ministries, department, agencies under each ministry, benefiting the poor directly or indirectly on the short-term and also on the long-term basis. Just to give a few examples of the programmes undertaken by Sarawak Government to tackle poverty issues:

- (a) Micro-capital assistance for small business ventures such as Low-Income Family Empowerment (LIFE) and *Bantuan Ketua Isi Rumah Wanita Sarawak (KIRWaS)* implemented by my ministry;
- (b) Cash assistance such as *Subsidi Yuran Pengasuhan dan Pendidikan Awal Kanak-kanak*, Endowment Fund Sarawak (EFS);
- (c) *Bantuan Ibu Bersalin (BIB)* also implemented by my ministry;
- (d) Entrepreneurship such as *Geran Usahawan Welbest*, *Geran Agropreneur Muda* and *Skim Kredit Mikro Sarawak* under Ministry of Food Industry, Commodity and Regional Development;
- (e) There is agriculture assistance such as Agriculture Development Programmes for various crops such as pepper, sago, rubber, oil palm, coconut, fruit trees, vegetable and cash crops, agrofood entrepreneur, aquaculture industrial zones; fishery inputs and monsoon season aid for Fishermen; *Program Bayaran Elaun Sara Hidup Nelayan Darat*; and Agrotourism;
- (f) There is also skills Training for Women and Ethnic Minority under my ministry;
- (g) Housing Assistance such as the *Kampung Extension Scheme*, *Program Pembaikan Rumah Rakyat Miskin Sarawak*, Housing Deposit Assistance Scheme, and Sarawak Rental Assistance Scheme under the Kementerian Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan;
- (h) Educational Assistance such as *Program Bantuan Pakaian Seragam Sekolah*, *Perkhidmatan Pengangkutan Percuma Pelajar Sekolah*, and *Program Tuisyen Sekolah Menengah* for SPM students under Yayasan Sarawak; and
- (i) Medical Aid such as *Bantuan untuk Pesakit Buah Pinggang*, *Bantuan Perubatan*, and *Bantuan Alat Tiruan ataupun alat sokongan di bawah kementerian saya*.

YB Datuk Mong anak Dagang: (*Supplementary Question*) Thank you, Dato Sri Minister. Tuan Speaker, I have two supplementary questions here:

- (a) What are the efforts undertaken by the Ministry to assist productive welfare recipients in increasing their income? and
- (b) How many of the poor received monthly assistance from Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Sarawak?

Thank you.

Menteri Pembangunan Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Kesejahteraan Komuniti (YB Dato Sri Hajah Fatimah Abdullah): Tuan Speaker, to answer the supplementary questions from the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Bukit Begunan; efforts undertaken by the ministry to assist productive welfare recipients in increasing their income, the ministry through the Sarawak Social Welfare Department (JKMS) provides a Wellbest Entrepreneur Grant up to a maximum amount of RM5,000. This one grant is mainly for productive monthly welfareaid recipients or households as a means to enable them to expand their businesses, increase their income, and consequently they can be out of the list of monthly aid recipients. A successful Wellbest entrepreneur is defined as one who earns a net income or monthly sales exceeding RM1,200.

As for the answer to the second supplementary question; for the information of the Honourable Member for Bukit Begunan, the Sarawak Government provides monthly financial assistance to the under privilege. From January to April 2025, a total of 45,240 low-income individuals in Sarawak received federal monthly aid based on the national poverty line income of RM1,198. Additionally, 9,944 low-income individuals benefitted from the State general assistance based on the *Pendapatan Garis Kemiskinan* (PGK) RM990 and the breakdown of the assistance are as follows:

- (a) 21,604 recipients for *Bantuan Warga Emas*;
- (b) 6,580 for *Bantuan Kanak-kanak*;
- (c) 9,935 for *Bantuan Am*;
- (d) 3,445 for *Elaun Pekerja Orang Kurang Upaya*;
- (e) 2,356 untuk *Penjagaan OKU*;
- (f) 11,230 for *Bantuan OKU Tidak Berupaya Bekerja*; dan
- (g) 25 recipients of *Bantuan Anak Pelihara*.

Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Dato Dennis Ngau, Telang Usan.

YB Dato Dennis Ngau: Tuan Speaker, first and foremost, a very good morning to you, Tuan Speaker. My question is no. 8.

Penamatan Projek Upper Baram Forest Area Project (UBFA)

(8) YB Dato Dennis Ngau bertanya kepada Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar: Baru-baru ini terdapat laporan akhbar mengenai penamatan projek ITTO iaitu *Upper Baram Forest Area Project* (UBFA):

- (a) Mohon penjelasan mengapa Projek tersebut ditamatkan? dan
- (b) Apakah tindakan dan perancangan kerajaan untuk komuniti di dalam kawasan yang terlibat selepas penamatan projek tersebut?

Timbalan Menteri Perancangan Bandar, Pentadbiran Tanah dan Alam Sekitar (YB Datuk Haji Len Talif Salleh): Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker dan terima kasih, Yang Berhormat bagi Telang Usan.

Assalamualaikum dan Salam sejahtera. Untuk menjawab soalan dari Yang Berhormat bagi Telang Usan; untuk makluman Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Telang Usan, Kerajaan Sarawak telah menandatangani empat Surat Perjanjian Persetujuan Projek bersama International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) iaitu dua projek pada 20 Mac 2023 dan dua lagi pada 9 September 2024. Tiga daripada projek ini terletak di Ulu Baram, manakala satu lagi di Sungai Menyang, Lubok Antu.

Semasa Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Pemandu yang bertarikh 10 Oktober 2024 yang dipengerusikan oleh Pengarah, Jabatan Hutan Sarawak; hanya satu (1) sahaja projek *Upper Baram Forest Area Project* (UBFA) yang melibatkan *Bruno Manser Fonds* (BMF) iaitu *Management of*

Upper Baram for Conservation and Sustainable Development with Involvement of Local Communities telah ditamatkan. Penamatan projek tersebut adalah wajar kerana:

- (a) *Bruno Manser Fonds* (BMF) yang berpangkalan di Switzerland tidak memenuhi syarat yang ditetapkan oleh Kerajaan Sarawak di mana mereka memberi penekanan dan bertegas kepada satu kaum sahaja iaitu kaum Penan, sedangkan terdapat komuniti-komuniti lain seperti kaum Kenyah, Kelabit dan Saban yang juga mempunyai kepentingan yang sama di kawasan tersebut. Jadi, sekiranya perkara ini tidak dibendung lebih awal, ini akan memecah-belah keharmonian komuniti di kawasan tersebut;
- (b) BMF hanya hendak menjadikan kawasan tersebut sebagai "*Purely Conservation Area*" bagi kelangsungan hidup untuk kaum Penan, sedangkan sudah ada TPA atau kawasan terlindung sepenuhnya yang berhampiran; dan
- (c) Penamatan projek juga telah dipersetujui oleh pihak ITTO. Tindakan menamatkan projek ini tidak akan menjejaskan kelangsungan hidup komuniti di kawasan tersebut termasuk komuniti Penan memandangkan banyak projek dan program untuk meningkatkan taraf hidup yang telah dan akan dilaksanakan oleh Jabatan Hutan, kementerian, jabatan-jabatan dan agensi-agensi kerajaan yang lain di dalam pelbagai bidang.

Untuk makluman, sejak tahun 1992 Jabatan Hutan Sarawak tidak pernah menamatkan projek yang telah ditandatangani dengan ITTO kecuali projek ini. Sekian, terima kasih.

YB Dato Dennis Ngau: (*Soalan Tambahan*) Terima kasih, Timbalan Menteri. Tuan Speaker, izinkan saya membuat dua soalan tambahan.

- (a) Berapa banyak Projek ITTO yang telah dilaksanakan di Sarawak setakat ini dah jumlah tajaan ITTO tersebut? dan
- (b) Apakah projek baharu yang ditandatangani dengan ITTO?

Timbalan Menteri Perancangan Bandar, Pentadbiran Tanah dan Alam Sekitar (YB Datuk Haji Len Talif Salleh): Tuan Speaker, terima kasih sekali lagi dan terima kasih, Yang Berhormat bagi Telang Usan. Untuk soalan no.1, setakat ini kerajaan melalui Jabatan Hutan Sarawak telah bekerjasama dengan ITTO untuk 16 projek sejak 1992 iaitu 33 tahun yang lalu berjumlah RM68.8 juta. Ini termasuklah projek-projek di bawah jalinan kerjasama Kerajaan Persekutuan dan ITTO yang dilaksanakan oleh Jabatan Hutan Sarawak dan untuk soalan kedua, Kerajaan Sarawak melalui Jabatan Hutan juga akan menjalankan dua lagi projek baharu bersama iaitu yang dijadualkan untuk dilaksanakan bermula pada tahun ini yang bertempat di:

- (a) Sungai Menyan, Batang Ai dengan jumlah peruntukan sebanyak RM1.12 juta dari Amerika Syarikat dan Australia untuk *wildlife and human conflicts, restoration tour guides, ecotourism, capacity building* yang melibatkan tujuh buah rumah panjang; dan
- (b) Di *Upper Baram* dengan jumlah peruntukan sebanyak RM645,000 dari Kerajaan Jepun melalui ITTO yang meluluskan projek yang sedia ada yang bakal tamat pada Mac 2026 untuk *community base conservation in natural solutions world climate change*.

Kerajaan Sarawak melalui Jabatan Hutan tidak mempunyai masalah untuk bekerjasama dengan mana-mana NGO sama ada dari dalam atau luar negara selagi mereka tidak mempunyai agenda yang bertentangan dengan polisi Kerajaan Negeri ataupun dengan Kerajaan Persekutuan. Terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Dato Paulus Palu Gumbang, Batu Danau.

YB Dato Paulus Palu Gumbang: Tuan Speaker, terima kasih dan selamat pagi. Soalan saya no. 9.

Penanaman Padi di Bahagian Limbang

(9) YB Dato Paulus Palu Gumbang bertanya kepada Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah: Berapakah kawasan yang telah dikenal pasti sesuai untuk penanaman padi di Bahagian Limbang amnya dan Daerah Limbang khususnya?

Timbalan Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah (Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah) (YB Datuk Maclaine Ben @ Martin Ben): Tuan Speaker, terima kasih. Terima kasih, Yang Berhormat bagi Batu Danau. Untuk makluman Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Batu Danau, pihak Kementerian telah mengenal pasti 11 kawasan dengan keluasan 4,264 hektar yang berpotensi untuk penanaman padi secara moden dan komersial di Bahagian Limbang. Daripada 11 kawasan tersebut, enam (6) kawasan berjumlah keluasan 2,734 hektar terletak di Bahagian Limbang adalah seperti berikut:

- (a) Kampung Pandam,
- (b) Telahak,
- (c) Meritam,
- (d) Lubok Piasau,
- (e) Merasam dan;
- (f) Ulak.

Bagi di kawasan yang berjumlah 1,530 hektar yang terletak di Daerah Lawas pula adalah seperti berikut:

- (a) Skim Sundar,
- (b) Merapok Ulu dan Laut,
- (c) Tanjung Katong,
- (d) Trusan,
- (e) Long Semadoh dan Ba'Kelalan.

Sekian, terima kasih.

YB Dato Paulus Palo Gumbang: *(Soalan Tambahan)* Tuan Speaker, saya ada dua soalan tambahan.

- (a) Berapakah keluasan kawasan yang telah diwartakan untuk penanaman padi di Daerah Limbang dan Lawas? dan
- (b) Apakah status pelaksanaan projek pembangunan industri padi dan beras di Daerah Limbang?

Timbalan Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah (Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah) (YB Datuk Maclaine Ben @ Martin Ben): Terima kasih, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Batu Danau. Untuk soalan pertama, untuk makluman Ahli Yang Berhormat terdapat dua kawasan di Daerah Limbang dan Lawas yang telah diwartakan sebagai kawasan penanaman padi iaitu kawasan Kampung Pandam, Limbang dengan keluasan 809 hektar dan kawasan Sundar, Lawas dengan keluasan 300 hektar.

Bagi soalan tambahan no. 2 pula, bagi kawasan yang telah diwartakan iaitu Kampung Pandam, Jabatan Perairan dan Saliran Sarawak ianya sedang dalam peringkat penyediaan dokumen tender untuk pelantikan perunding ukur *Light Detection and Ranging* (LiDAR). Kerja ukur tersebut dijangka selesai pada penghujung tahun ini ataupun suku ke-4 2025. Bagi kawasan NCR, Kementerian telah mencadangkan bajet kepada Kerajaan Negeri dan Persekutuan untuk pembangunan infrastruktur di bawah RMK-13. Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Johnny Pang Leong Ming, Tanjong Batu.

YB Encik Johnny Pang Leong Ming: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. My question is no. 10.

Current Port Master Plan

(10) YB Enck Johnny Pang Leong Ming to ask the Minister for Infrastructure and Port Development: Can you provide an overview of the current port master plan being implemented by the Sarawak Government, detailing strategic developments and initiatives?

Timbalan Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan (Pembangunan dan Pelabuhan) (YB Dato Majang anak Renggi): Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Thank you, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Tanjong Batu. For the information of the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Tanjong Batu, the ministry is in the process of formulating a comprehensive Sarawak Ports Master Plan aim at providing a strategic direction for port development across the state, in line with the policy of clustered growth in the northern, central and southern region.

A Port Advisor and a Task Force have been appointed to lead the development of this Master Plan which involves gathering input from key stakeholders, benchmarking against international best practices, and ensuring Sarawak's ports are well-positioned to drive long-term economic development and enhance regional competitiveness.

The Master Plan will outline strategic initiatives and development priorities upon its completion and will be aligned with the role of the forthcoming Sarawak Ports Authority, which aims to streamline port governance by consolidating the functions of existing port authorities under a single, centralised entity. Thank you.

YB Encik Johnny Pang Leong Ming: (*Supplementary Question*) Thank you, Tuan Speaker and Honourable Deputy Minister. I have two supplementary questions.

- (a) How is the ministry ensuring that the new port master plan meets the need of all major ports in Sarawak? and
- (b) What will be the function of the new Sarawak Ports Authority under the master plan?

Timbalan Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan (Pembangunan Pelabuhan) (YB Dato Majang anak Rengi): Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Thank you, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Tanjong Batu for your two supplementary questions. The ministry will engage closely with key stakeholders, the including state agencies existing port authorities, the terminal operator, and industry players to ensure that the master plan reflects the unique role and requirements of each port. This engagement along with data analysis and site assessment will help tailor development strategies that are more locally responsive and regionally competitive.

To answer the second supplementary question, the new Sarawak Ports Authority (SarPA) will serve as the central regulatory body for all ports in the state, replacing the current individual port authorities. SarPA will have ownership of the Sarawak Port Master Plan and have responsibility for policy making, the regulation and to harmonize development efforts and ensuring consistent governance, efficiency and alliance with Sarawak's long term economic goals. Thank you

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Johnichal Rayong anak Ngipa, Engkilili.

YB Encik Johnichal Rayong anak Ngipa: Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker. Soalan saya no. 11.

Tarif Baharu oleh Pentadbiran Amerika Syarikat

(11) YB Encik Johnichal Rayong anak Ngipa bertanya kepada Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa, Industri dan Pelaburan: Adakah tarif baharu yang diperkenalkan oleh pentadbiran Amerika Syarikat memberi kesan kepada ekonomi Sarawak?

(50) YB Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor to ask the Minister for International Trade, Industry and Investment: What is the government's preparation for fronting with the 24% reciprocal tariff on Malaysia imports into the US after the 90-day postponed period (April 9, 2025 until July 8, 2025) with the 10% baseline tariff applied instead?

Timbalan Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa, Industri dan Pelaburan (YB Datuk Dr Malcolm Mussen anak Lamoh): Thank you, Tuan Speaker. In view of the same subject matter raised by both Yang Berhormat bagi Engkilili and question no. 11 as well as Yang Berhormat bagi Lingga question no. 50. I would like to answer both questions concurrently.

For the information of the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Engkilili dan Lingga, the reciprocal tariff announced by the United States (U.S) has disrupted the global supply chain and production. However, the direct impact of the U.S reciprocal tariff on Sarawak's economy is still limited. Sarawak's exports to the U.S amounted to RM1.2 billion in 2023. These total exports only contributed 0.9% to Sarawak's total exports with the main product being ferro alloy.

For the information of the Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, Sarawak's main exports consist of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), petroleum, palm oil and aluminium. The exports amounted to RM102.6 billion in 2023 which contributed 78.4% to Sarawak's total exports. Our main export market is Asia, which contributed 73.4% to the overall export market. As such, this new tariff is expected to have a minimal direct impact on Sarawak.

Nonetheless, Sarawak will continue to refine our economic policies by adapting to global trade dynamics in line with proactive measures taken by the Federal Government to address the impact of the reciprocal tariff. These measures include:

- (a) Strengthening trade partnerships;
- (b) Diversifying export markets while also enhancing supply chain resilience;
- (c) Investing in strategic industries; and
- (d) Exploring bilateral trade agreements to safeguard economic stability.

In order to further assess the impact of these tariffs, the Federal Government has established the National Geoeconomic Command Centre (NGCC), which will formulate a comprehensive strategy to mitigate their impact on the economy and key industries.

Malaysia will continue the strategic high-level engagement with the U.S. counterpart. The Malaysia Government through MITI will leverage the Malaysia – U.S Trade & Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) to address the impact of the current U.S tariff. Sarawak will continue to capitalize on our strengths and foster deeper partnership to enhance resilience and sustain growth despite market uncertainties. Thank you.

YB Encik Johnichal Rayong anak Ngipa: (*Supplementary Question*) Terima kasih, Yang Berhormat Timbalan Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa, Industri dan Pelaburan, YB Datuk Dr. Malcolm Mussen dengan jawapan yang begitu mendalam dan jelas sekali. Tuan Speaker, I have two supplementary questions:

- (a) How will this reciprocal tariff affect Sarawak's trade relations with countries in Asia? and
- (b) How will the new tariffs affect Sarawak's major exports, such as palm oil, natural gas and petroleum.

Thank you.

Timbalan Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa, Industri dan Pelaburan (YB Datuk Dr Malcolm Mussen anak Lamoh): Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Thank you, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Engkilili.

For supplementary question no. 1, this reciprocal tariff is expected to have minimal impact on Sarawak's trade relations with key Asian partners, including India, China, Japan and South Korea. These countries remain our major trading partners. Trade continues to be strengthened through various Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Sarawak will utilize these FTAs to diversify and broaden our export markets.

In addition, Malaysia, as the chairman of ASEAN will work collaboratively to strengthen ASEAN's influence in negotiations with the U.S. or United States. Malaysia will address the broader implications of the U.S. tariff measures on regional trade and investment flows. Discussions will focus on charting a way forward and mitigating potential disruptions to regional trade, supply chain and cross-border investments.

For supplementary question no. 2, the new tariffs introduced by the United States against Malaysia have a limited impact on the economy of Sarawak, primarily due to the export destinations of our key commodities, namely:

- (a) LNG is predominantly directed to Japan and China;
- (b) Palm oil is mainly exported to China and India; and
- (c) Petroleum exports are largely concentrated in Peninsular Malaysia, Asia and Thailand.

As a result, Sarawak's trade flow remains resilient, supported by its trade relations, which are more focused on other countries. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Iskandar bin Turkee, Jepak.

YB Encik Iskandar bin Turkee: Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker.

*Hari Gawai bakal tiba,
Minum tuak dalam gelas;
Sidang DUN sudah tiba,
Soalan saya no. 13.*

Yayasan Sarawak International School di Jepak

(13) YB Encik Iskandar bin Turkee bertanya kepada Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat: Adakah kerajaan mempunyai rancangan untuk membina Yayasan Sarawak International School di Jepak, Bintulu?

Timbalan Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat (Pengajian Tinggi dan Inovasi) (YB Datuk Dr Haji Annuar bin Rapa'ee): Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker. Thank you very much, Yang Berhormat bagi Jepak. The question is asking where will this Yayasan Sarawak International School be built in Bintulu? I would like to congratulate the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Jepak because it will be built at the Jepak New Township. Thank you very much.

YB Encik Iskandar Bin Turkee: (*Soalan Tambahan*) Timbalan Menteri, saya ada dua soalan tambahan.

- (a) Apakah pencapaian pelajar di Yayasan Sarawak International Secondary School dalam peperiksaan antarabangsa seperti ujian *Cambridge checkpoint*? dan
- (b) Bagaimanakah kerajaan merancang untuk memastikan kelestarian dan kualiti pendidikan di Yayasan Sarawak International Secondary School yang akan dibina di Bintulu?

Terima kasih.

Timbalan Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat (Pengajian Tinggi dan Inovasi) (YB Datuk Dr Haji Annuar bin Rapa'ee): Terima kasih, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Jepak. To answer this question, Tuan Speaker, first of all, we must know that the syllabus for this international school consists of Year 7 until Year 11. There will be a checkpoint exam on Year 9. In other words, it is similar to Form 3. Whereas, in our national syllabus, we do not have any exams. For the international school run by Yayasan, it will have a, what we call, a checkpoint exam. This checkpoint examination is very important.

- (a) Because they will compete with peer to peer not only locally, but it is an international examination, therefore, it will also compare us with our other international students. This examination consists of three subjects; Mathematics, Science and English and it be assessed throughout according to the topic of the subjects not only the subjects but base on each individual topic within that subject and the score is given from one (1) – (50).

And I would like to share with you a very good news among the first cohort of our students who sat for this exam last year. They have managed to get, all of them have managed to get above the international average, in other words, they are better off than many of our international students who sat for these examinations. This is very important because we know that these students are above other international students. So, in another word, what we are doing now is in the right path for our students in Sarawak.

- (b) For the second question that is asking about sustainability and the quality of these syllabuses. As you know, this syllabus is under the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) which is one by Cambridge. In another word, it has not been affected by any form of changes of the policy by the national system because it is an international syllabus. Whoever changes the national syllabus will not affect our international students who are in this school.

Therefore, I can assure you that with this form of sustainability as well as quality will be assured by our IGCSE. And, also, we also asked Cambridge University periodically or *berkala* to assess the standard of our students. Therefore, it is a very comprehensive form of syllabus which will make sure that you are not affected by any changes of national policy as long as it is based on the IGCSE. Thank you very much.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, question time is up.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA

SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPLY (2024) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas): Tuan Speaker, I beg to introduce the Supplementary Supply (2024) Bill, 2025 to be read the first time.

Bill is read a first time

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas): Tuan Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Supplementary Supply (2024) Bill, 2025 to be read the second time on Thursday, 22nd May 2025.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the second reading, community stage and third reading of the Supplementary Supply (2024) Bill, 2025 is set to be on Thursday, 22nd May 2025.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA

SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPLY (2025) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas): Tuan Speaker, I beg to introduce the Supplementary Supply (2025) Bill, 2025 to be read a first time.

Bill is read a first time

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kewangan dan Ekonomi Baru Kedua, Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas): Tuan Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Supplementary Supply (2025) Bill, 2025 will be read the second time on Thursday, 22nd May 2025.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the second reading, community stage, third reading of the Supplementary Supply (2025) Bill, 2025 is said on Thursday, 22nd May 2025.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA

SARAWAK BIODIVERSITY CENTRE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn): Tuan Speaker, I beg to introduce the Bill intituled, “*Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025*” to be read the first time.

Bill is read a first time

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn): Tuan Speaker, I wish to give notice that this Amendment Bill will be read for the second time today, 20th May 2025.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA

LAND CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan): Tuan Speaker, I beg to introduce the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read for the first time.

Bill is read a first time

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan): And, I wish to give notice that this Bill would be read a second time today.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Tuan Speaker, I beg to introduce the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read a first time.

Bill is read a first time

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Tuan Speaker, I wish to give notice that this Bill will be read a second time today.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG PERTAMA

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND (DISSOLUTION) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas): Tuan Speaker, I beg to introduce the Infrastructure Development Trust Fund (Dissolution) Bill, 2025 to be read a first time.

Bill is read a first time

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Infrastruktur dan Pembangunan Pelabuhan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.37 Bukit Saban (YB Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas): Tuan Speaker, I wish to give notice that this Bill be read a second time on Wednesday, 21st May 2025.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-Ahli Yang Berhormat, the second reading, community stage and the third reading of the Infrastructure Development Trust Fund (Dissolution) Bill, 2025 is set tomorrow, Wednesday, 21st May 2025.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KEDUA

SARAWAK BIODIVERSITY CENTRE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn): Tuan Speaker, I beg to move that the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read a second time.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak was the first in Malaysia to enact a biodiversity law named the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre Ordinance, 1997 (herein after, refers as the Ordinance) to safeguard Sarawak's rich biodiversity.

The Ordinance was first amended in 2003 to streamline Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) core functions towards implementing traditional knowledge documentation, bioprospecting, and regulating biodiversity research. Following Malaysia's adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) on 29th October 2010, which came into force on 12th October 2014, the Sarawak Government further amended the Ordinance in 2014 to harmonise it with the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

The 2014 amendment incorporated provisions that mandate prior informed consent (PIC) and ensure benefit sharing with Sarawak's indigenous communities for R&D (Research & Development), and commercialisation initiatives.

A review of the Ordinance in 2022 identified areas requiring refinement to enhance commercialisation opportunities, intellectual property protection, and uniformity with national biodiversity laws under the Access to Biological Resources and Benefit Sharing Act 2017 (Act 795) which was passed by the Malaysian Parliament on 9th October 2017 and came into force on 18th December 2020.

Since the amendments to the Ordinance in 2004 and 2014, SBC has made significant progress in several areas, namely:

- (a) Traditional Knowledge Documentation

SBC has documented numerous traditional knowledge of 26 communities from 121 locations in Sarawak, ensuring the preservation and recognition of their cultural heritage. There are over 40 ethnic communities and sub-ethnic groups in Sarawak.

(b) R&D and Bioprospecting Initiatives

SBC has enhanced its R&D capabilities, resulting in several successful collaborations with national and international research institutions. Namely, the know-how to develop research to be industry-relevant and commercial ready; and

(c) Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Mechanisms

The implementation of the ABS mechanism has ensured that benefits derived from the use of biological resources associated with traditional knowledge are fairly shared with the natives of Sarawak. Additionally, blockchain technology is used to enhance ABS traceability, transparency and immutable tracking of biological resources with traditional knowledge that are commercialised thereby, building trust and compliance among all stakeholders. This Amendment Bill will strengthen Sarawak's position in biodiversity governance, reinforces State rights, and enable economic opportunities through sustainable resource management.

Now, Tuan Speaker, I wish to go into the salient points of the Amendment Bill.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE AMENDMENT BILL

This Amendment Bill introduces provisions in realising commercialisation of Sarawak's biological resources and SBC Research and Development (R&D), as well as in uniformity with national laws in harmonisation with international protocols.

New and Updated Definitions

Firstly, on the Bill and updated definitions. This Amendment introduces:

- (a) a new definition of '*microorganism*' to include the viruses, viroids, and sterile organisms;
- (b) a revised definition of '*Minister*' to reflect the Minister responsible for the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre;
- (c) the inclusion of '*native*' to have the same meaning assigned to it under the Interpretation Ordinance, 2005 Chapter 61; and
- (d) We want to expand the purpose of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre.

Expanded Purpose of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre

In synchronising the functions of the Centre with the Powers of Council, an additional purpose is added, which is providing facilities for commercial or any other purposes incidental to the powers of the Council nearby we got to see which in enhancing the powers of the Council.

Enhancing Powers of the Council

Section 6 of the Ordinance on the Powers of the Council is enhanced with new provisions that, among others empowers the Council to apply for external funding, to own and commercialise intellectual property rights or to license its use for commercial and non-commercial purposes, and to provide or develop facilities for research and development for scientific, commercial and any other purposes, incidental thereto.

Section 6A empowers the Council to incorporate companies and subsidiaries for commercialisation of research outcomes.

Biodiversity Centre Fund for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) – Related Projects

The Biodiversity Centre Fund is expanded with this Amendment to include monetary benefits obtained from a benefit sharing agreement.

Enhancement of Penalty and Enforcement Provisions

The other important point is enhancement of penalty and enforcement provision. Tuan Speaker, apart from the Amendment above mentioned, this Bill also provides for increase penalties for offences committed under the Ordinance. The amendment to Section 22 for example, increases the penalty for the collection or removal of any protected resources from their habitat for research and development purposes without permit from the Council to a fine of not less than RM50,000 and not exceeding RM500,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years and not exceeding 10 years or both. These are for individual offenders. In a case of a body corporate, a fine of not less than RM1 million, this is in ringgit, all are in Malaysian Ringgit and not exceeding RM5 million.

With regards to the enforcement provisions, the powers of seizure and arrest are enhanced by allowing the disposal and temporary release of anything seized under the Ordinance by the Chief Executive Officer and the release of any person arrested under the Ordinance or regulations on a personal bond.

Financial Penalty Provision

A new Section 33A on Financial Penalty is included in this Bill, where the Council may impose a financial penalty of up to RM20 million for any breach or non-compliance. For repeated offenders for offences the penalty increases tenfold. Any unpaid financial penalty may be recovered as a civil debt, where the Court may impose additional late payment penalties of up to twice the unpaid amount, along with costs of recovery, and all financial penalties collected will be deposited into the State Consolidated Fund. Other features of the Bill are as stated in the explanatory note or statement to the Bill which are the Honourable Members of this august House may refer to.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak's rich biodiversity presents untapped economic opportunities in pharmaceutical, nutraceutical and cosmeceuticals sectors, and the bio-industry. The Amendment ensures stronger commercialisation mechanisms through SBC, with uniformity with national laws and harmonisation with international protocols, reinforcing Sarawak's leadership in biodiversity governance.

By strengthening the Ordinance, this Bill empowers Sarawak to harness its rich biological resources, ensuring scientific progress translates into economic benefits through commercial ventures.

In conclusion, Tuan Speaker, this Amendment is timely and necessary to ensure Sarawak's biodiversity governance remains effective, sustainable, and economically viable. Tuan Speaker, for all the reasons which I have mentioned, I therefore, urge all the Honourable Members of this august House to fully support this Amendment Bill and I therefore, beg to move.

Tuan Speaker: Another Honourable Minister to second?

Menteri Utiliti dan Telekomunikasi; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 27 Sebuyau (YB Dato Sri Haji Julaihi Bin Haji Narawi: Tuan Speaker, I beg to second.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-Ahli Yang Berhormat, before I call the Honourable Members to participate on the debate of the Bill, we have a short break. Sitting resumes at 11.00 a.m.

(Mesyuarat ditangguhkan pada pukul 10.31 pagi)

(Mesyuarat dimulakan pada pukul 11.10 pagi)

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, before I call upon the Honourable Members of this august House to debate on the second reading of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill 2025, I would like to remind the Members under Standing Order 32 (1), Contains of Speeches, quote, “*A member shall confine his observation to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto*”.

Please do not re-open the entire Principal Ordinance while debating this. Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, under Standing Order 31 (8), I hereby limit speeches to a maximum of 15 minutes, I now call upon the Honourable Members who wishes to speak. Member for Murum.

YB Encik Kennedy Chukpai Ugon: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Good morning, Salam sejahtera, Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur dan Salam Segulai Sejalai. Thank you for the honour and the opportunity given to debate on the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 tabled by the Yang Berhormat Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat for the second reading.

Tuan Speaker, today, I stand before you to express my strong support for the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which is a vital and timely measure to strengthen our legal framework for the conservation, sustainable use, and scientific exploration of our rich biological heritage. This legislation embodies a progressive approach that not only modernizes existing laws but also paves the way for Sarawak to become a leader in biodiversity research and biotech innovation.

Firstly, the Bill updates the definition of “*microorganism*” to include any organism of microscopic size and parts thereof, such as viruses and viroids. This expansion is crucial because scientific understanding of microorganisms has vastly advanced, and our laws must keep pace with these developments to ensure comprehensive regulation. By broadening this definition, the Bill ensures that no tiny but significant organism falls outside legal protections or regulatory oversight, thereby promoting responsible research and utilization of all microscopic life forms that are vital to ecological balance and biotechnological progress.

Furthermore, the Bill introduces flexibility by empowering the minister to specify different dates for the commencement of various provisions. This strategic move is essential because it allows the phased and well-planned implementation, ensuring that each section is effectively operationalized, with adequate resources and awareness among stakeholders, ultimately leading to better compliance and enforcement.

Tuan Speaker, the amendments also emphasize the importance of research and development facilities by enabling the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre to establish and manage such facilities for scientific, commercial, or other purposes. This provision is instrumental in fostering innovation, attracting scientists, investors, and entrepreneurs who can develop new products, medicines, and technologies based on our unique biological resources. It ensures that Sarawak remains at the forefront of biodiversity research, unlocking economic opportunities while promoting sustainable practices. A core principle embedded within this Bill is the ethical and equitable use of our biodiversity resources. By allowing the Council to license the use of biological materials and share benefits fairly, the legislation upholds international standards such as the Nagoya Protocol. This ensures that local communities and indigenous peoples, who are the custodians of much of Sarawak's biodiversity, are rightfully recognized and rewarded for their traditional knowledge and resources, fostering a culture of fairness, respect, and shared prosperity.

Tuan Speaker, the Bill strengthens enforcement mechanisms by granting authorities the power of seize equipment and materials used in illegal activities, and to temporarily release or surrender items under court supervision. These provisions are vital in combating illegal collection, trade, or destruction of protected species and habitats. They serve as effective deterrents and ensure that enforcement agencies can act swiftly and decisively to uphold conservation laws, safeguarding our natural heritage for future generations. Moreover, the legislation empowers the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre to establish and manage companies dedicated to research and commercialisation. This strategic move is designed to translate scientific discoveries into marketable products, thereby fostering economic diversification, creating jobs, and encouraging technology transfer. Such initiatives will help transform Sarawak into a hub for biodiversity-based industries, promoting sustainable economic growth that benefits local communities and aligns with national development goals.

Tuan Speaker, in addition, the Bill introduces clear and stringent penalties for violations, including financial sanctions and the possibility of offenders being released on personal bonds. These provisions highlight the seriousness with which we treat biodiversity conservation and serve as a strong deterrent against illegal activities, ensuring that laws are respected and effectively enforced.

In conclusion, this Bill is not merely a collection of legal updates, it represents a comprehensive, forward-looking strategy that balances conservation with scientific innovation and economic development. It recognizes the immense value of Sarawak's biodiversity as a national asset, and it provides the necessary legal tools to ensure its sustainable management and utilization.

By supporting this Bills or this legislation, we are taking a decisive step towards safeguarding our natural heritage, fostering scientific progress, and promoting equitable benefits for all Sarawakians. Therefore, I urge all Members of this august House to support this Bill wholeheartedly, for it is an investment in Sarawak's future, a future where our rich biodiversity continues to thrive, inspire innovation, and contribute to the well-being of our society. With that, I beg to support the Motion for the passing of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Tellian.

YB Encik Royston bin Valentine: Selamat pagi, Salam Sarawakku Sayang dan Salam Sarawakku Makmur. Terima kasih Tuan Speaker di atas peluang kepada Tellian untuk turut serta dalam perbahasan ini. Terlebih dahulu saya ingin mengucapkan tahniah kepada Tarat merangkap Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat Sarawak selaku Menteri yang bertanggungjawab membawa, dan yang membenteng *Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025*.

Tuan Speaker, *Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025*, ini bertujuan untuk mengemaskini dan mengukuhkan rangka kerja Ordinan Biodiversiti Sarawak yang sedia ada. Pindaan ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keupayaan penyelidikan, memudahkan pengkomersialan produk berasaskan biodiversiti dan menambah baik mekanisme penguatkuasaan dalam tadbir urus biodiversiti Sarawak. Kemaskini perundangan ini dilakukan berdasarkan pindaan terdahulu (terutamanya pada 2003 dan 2014) yang mengalihkan tumpuan *Sarawak Biodiversity Centre* daripada inventori dan peraturan biodiversiti am kepada penyelidikan bioteknologi intensif dan pembangunan sumber biologi yang mampan. Pindaan ini seterusnya akan memperkasakan *Sarawak Biodiversity Centre* untuk bertindak sebagai pemangkin inovasi dan pengkomersialan sambil melindungi kekayaan biodiversiti Sarawak khususnya.

Tuan Speaker, pindaan khusus yang dicadangkan untuk Ordinan Pusat Biodiversiti Sarawak ini di bawah *Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025* merangkumi perubahan utama seperti berikut:

- (a) Tadbir Urus dan Kemas kini Pentadbiran

Rang Undang-undang ini mencadangkan pindaan pada beberapa bahagian sedia ada dan memperkenalkan tiga bahagian baharu ataupun seksyen baharu iaitu 6A, 29A, dan 33A yang secara kolektifnya akan mengukuhkan rangka kerja tadbir urus serta keberkesanan operasi Majlis ketika ini.

(b) Mengukuhkan Penguatkuasaan

Rang Undang-undang ini mencadangkan langkah penguatkuasaan yang lebih kukuh untuk memastikan pematuhan peraturan biodiversiti di Sarawak. Ini termasuk memberikan kuasa tambahan kepada Majlis Biodiversiti Sarawak untuk memantau, menyiasat dan mengambil tindakan terhadap sebarang pelanggaran undang-undang dengan lebih tegas dan berkesan.

(c) Pengenalan Penalti Kewangan

Rang Undang-undang ini memperkenalkan penalti kewangan yang jelas terutamanya untuk kesalahan berkaitan ketidakpatuhan, dengan denda tidak melebihi RM20 juta. Penalti ini berfungsi sebagai penghalang yang kuat terhadap akses atau eksploitasi sumber biologi Sarawak yang tidak dibenarkan. Denda dan hasil yang dikutip daripada aktiviti komersial di bawah Ordinan akan disalurkan ke dalam Kumpulan Wang Disatukan Negeri untuk menyokong inisiatif alam sekitar dan pemuliharaan yang lebih luas di Sarawak.

(d) Sokongan untuk Penyelidikan dan Pengkomersialan

Pindaan Ordinan ini dengan tepat dan jelas membenar serta menggalakkan Majlis Biodiversiti Sarawak untuk menjalankan penyelidikan dan mengkomersialkan penemuan yang diperoleh daripada biodiversiti Sarawak. Ini menandakan peralihan ke arah memanfaatkan biodiversiti untuk pembangunan ekonomi sambil memastikan penggunaan mampan biodiversiti Sarawak.

Sebelum ini, Ordinan berkenaan tidak memberikan ruang kepada Majlis Biodiversiti Sarawak untuk mengkomersialkan penemuan penyelidikannya sekali gus mengehadkan peluang penjanaan hasil untuk Sarawak. Oleh itu, pindaan ini akan membolehkan Majlis Biodiversiti Sarawak menjalin kerjasama komersial yang lebih luas, seperti yang melibatkan pengeluaran bahan api penerbangan mampan (SAF) daripada mikroalga yang berpotensi menjana pendapatan tambahan untuk Sarawak.

(e) Kuasa yang diperluaskan untuk Majlis Biodiversiti Sarawak

Dengan pindaan ini, Majlis akan mempunyai kuasa yang dipertingkatkan untuk mengawal selia akses kepada sumber biologi di samping mengawasi aktiviti penyelidikan.

Tuan Speaker, pindaan Ordinan ini sudah pasti akan membawa pelbagai kelebihan besar kepada Wilayah Sarawak. Pindaan ini membolehkan Sarawak Biodiversity Centre menyediakan kemudahan untuk tujuan komersial dan memperluas peranan kepada aktiviti yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan biodiversiti Sarawak secara lebih luas. Sarawak Biodiversity Centre kini boleh menjalankan aktiviti komersial, termasuk mengkomersialkan hasil penyelidikan dan inovasi, seterusnya membuka peluang baharu kepada sektor bioteknologi dan bioindustri di Sarawak.

Pindaan ini juga akan memperkukuh kuasa Sarawak Biodiversity Centre untuk memohon, memiliki dan melesenkan hak harta intelek hasil penyelidikan. Ini membolehkan Sarawak melindungi hasil inovasi tempatan, menjalin kerjasama dengan pelbagai pihak dan menetapkan terma perkongsian manfaat seperti royalti, komisen atau skim pembahagian keuntungan yang memberi pulangan ekonomi kepada Sarawak dan komuniti tempatan. Seterusnya, pindaan ini memberi kuasa kepada Sarawak Biodiversity Centre untuk menubuhkan syarikat atau anak syarikat bagi mengurus

serta melaksanakan aktiviti komersial dan pembangunan, sekali gus mempercepat pembangunan ekonomi hijau dan bakal mewujudkan peluang pekerjaan baharu untuk rakyat Sarawak amnya.

Penguatkuasaan terhadap perlindungan sumber biodiversiti turut diperkukuh dengan peningkatan penalti yang lebih relevan bagi kesalahan mengambil atau mengalih sumber terlindung tanpa permit. Ini akan mengurangkan pencurian sumber, memelihara kekayaan biodiversiti dan memastikan sumber asli Sarawak kekal terpelihara untuk generasi akan datang. Tadbir urus dan pengurusan sumber akan menjadi lebih cekap, telus dan berkesan.

Tuan Speaker, pindaan ini mencerminkan visi strategik Sarawak untuk mengimbangi pertumbuhan ekonomi dengan pengawasan alam sekitar, menggalakkan penggunaan biodiversiti yang mampan dan sejajar dengan matlamat global seperti Matlamat Pembangunan Mampan (SDG) Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu dan Strategi Pembangunan Pasca Covid-19 (PCDS) 2030 Sarawak. Ringkasnya, dengan kelulusan pindaan ini, Pusat Biodiversiti Sarawak akan sentiasa menjadi institusi yang berdedikasi untuk memulihara kekayaan biodiversiti Sarawak melalui penyelidikan, pemeliharaan, bioprospek serta memacu pertumbuhan ekonomi hijau melalui inovasi dalam bioteknologi. Maka dengan ini, Tellian menyokong penuh *Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025*. Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Kota Sentosa.

YB Encik Yap Yau Sin: Tuan Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate in the debate on the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill 2025. This Bill is both timely and necessary, as it seeks to strengthen the legal framework governing the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC), particularly in the areas of licensing, research, intellectual property (IP) ownership, and commercialization. These enhancements are crucial, given that Sarawak's rich and unique biodiversity, and they aim to strategically leverage this natural wealth for sustainable economic growth.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak's rainforest and ecosystem are home to countless endemic species with immense potential in various sectors, including:

- (a) Pharmaceuticals such as new drugs, enzymes, anti-cancer compounds, natural skincare products and health supplements;
- (b) Agriculture, including disease resistance crops and biofertilizers; and
- (c) Biotechnology such as biodegradable materials and bioactive compounds.

Tuan Speaker, by advancing research and development, reinforcing IP ownership and streamlining licensing and commercialization, SBC will be better positioned to unlock the economic value of these resources. This not only ensures that benefits are retained within Sarawak but also reduces reliance on foreign companies. Moreover, it empowers local scientists and entrepreneurs to generate homegrown innovations, helping to prevent the exploitation of our biodiversity by external interests.

The amendments are comprehensive, providing greater clarity on SBC's roles particularly in relation to IP Control and licensing authority. With improved mechanisms for patenting and licensing, SBC will be able to ensure that revenue generated from discoveries flow back to Sarawak and support local development.

Tuan Speaker, one of the most significant provisions in this Bill is the introduction of Section 6A, which empowers SBC to incorporate a company to better fulfil its functions. This is a forward-thinking move that will enable SBC to commercialize its research findings such as pharmaceutical, agricultural and bio-tech products derived from Sarawak's native flora and fauna more efficiently.

Through the establishment of a corporate entity, SBC can collaborate more effectively with private sector partners, investors and international stakeholders. It opens up avenues for joint ventures and funding opportunities while ensuring that Sarawak maintains control over its biological assets. Operating through a company also grants SBC legal and operational autonomy enabling it to enter into contracts, manage IP rights and independently handle revenues.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak's biodiversity is truly a treasure trove for both scientific discovery and economic advancement. By empowering SBC in the areas of research, IP ownership, licensing and commercialization. This Bill ensures that the benefits of our natural heritage are channelled back to our people. It bridges the gap between scientific innovation and commercial value aligning with the goals of the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy 2030 particularly on the part of covering sustainable development. With that, I express my full support for the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Tamin.

YB Ir. Christopher Gira @ Gira anak Sambang: Thank you, Tuan Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate on the proposed Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate YB Dato Sri Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat for tabling the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in this august House.

Tuan Speaker, I stand today to move the second reading of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. This Bill seeks to strengthen and modernize the legal framework governing the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) in line with the rapid advancements in science, technology and biodiversity governance.

Tuan Speaker, the original Sarawak Biodiversity Centre Ordinance, 1997 was landmark legislation at the time, positioning Sarawak as a regional leader in biodiversity research and conservation. However, over the past twenty 27 years, significant changes have occurred not only in biodiversity science but also in the legal landscape for conservation, benefit-sharing and indigenous knowledge protection.

This amendment is necessary to ensure that Sarawak's biodiversity governance is responsive and relevant. The Bill introduces new definitions including for the terms, "*microorganism*", "*Minister*", and "*native*" to reflect further administrative clarity.

This Bill introduces heavy penalties for violations. For individuals fines of up to RM500,000 or imprisonment of up to 10 years. For corporations, fines of up to RM5 million. This reflects the seriousness which Sarawak views as the protection of its biodiversity.

Clause 6 introduces a benefit sharing fund, ensuring that any monetary benefit derived from the use of Sarawak's biodiversity is reinvested in conservation, research and community benefit. Importantly, this Bill does not impose any financial burden on the government. In fact, it facilitates more effectively revenue collection from bio-based industries through penalties and benefit-sharing.

Tuan Speaker, this Bill represents a progressive step forward in ensuring that Sarawak continues to protect its natural heritage while promoting scientific innovation and economic development. It strengthens legal safeguards, respects native rights and support international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nagoya Protocol.

In conclusion, Tuan Speaker, the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is timely, well justified and aligned with Sarawak's strategic direction as we progress toward Post Covid-19 recovery, digital transformation and green economy goals.

I fully support this Bill and call upon all Honourable Members of this House to support this Bill wholeheartedly for the benefit of our environment, our scientific community and the people of Sarawak today and for generations to come. With that, Tuan Speaker, I beg to move. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat Encik Roland Duat anak Jubin.

YB Encik Roland Duat anak Jubin: Tuan Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to debate on the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Honourable Members of the Legislature, Sarawak is home to one of the oldest rainforests in the world and possesses high levels of endemism. Because of that, Sarawak Biodiversity Centre was established helping to safeguard species that may be endangered or undiscovered.

A biodiversity centre plays a crucial role in the conservation and sustainable management of biological diversity. The centre serves as a hub for protecting endangered species of plants, animals and microorganisms. It also educates the public, students and policymakers about the value of biodiversity and how to conserve it. In short, biodiversity centres are vital for maintain the ecological balance, supporting life systems and ensuring a sustainable future for all.

Having a Biodiversity Centre Ordinance is important for several critical reasons. It provides a legal foundation and framework that enhances the centre's ability to fulfil its mandate effectively and sustainably. Apart from granting the centre the authority to carry out its functions, enforce regulations and collaborate with other agencies and allowing the centre to generate and manage its own revenue; for example through research services, ecotourism and education programs, providing additional powers of the centre and the Council is crucial in order to create, develop, apply for own and hold intellectual property rights.

Tuan Speaker, enabling the Council to license the use of intellectual property rights whether it is for commercial or non-commercial purposes can help the government to manage the centre operations aligned with national and international biodiversity goals. The Centre and the Council can establish a legal basis for data sharing, joint research and policy advocacy in safer and more responsible way.

Allowing the council to apply for and seek loans, funds and other financial assistance for the government and other corporation, institution or body, whether it is within or outside Sarawak could ensures long-term operational stability regardless of political changes and protects the centre from dissolution or budget cuts without proper legislative processes.

Tuan Speaker, penalties set decades ago have not kept pace with inflation or the financial capacity of large corporations even as an individual. Increasing the compound quantum ensures the penalty remains meaningful and proportionate in today's context. Increasing the financial penalties serves as a stronger deterrent against violations. When the fines are too low, some individuals or corporations may see them as a cost of doing business. Higher penalties make non-compliance riskier. Tougher penalties emphasize the seriousness of the legal provisions under the Ordinance. The reinforce the principle the everyone, whether an individual or a corporate entity, is accountable for their actions and must comply with established laws.

Tuan Speaker, I support the amendment to increase the quantum of compound penalties for both individuals and body corporates in cases of breach or non-compliance with any provision of the Ordinance. Such a measure would strengthen enforcement and serve as a more effective deterrent against violations.

By granting the Biodiversity Centre greater autonomy in its management, it can operate more effectively and efficiently, leveraging its expertise to achieve its conservation goals. I wholeheartedly endorse this Bill and urge all lawmakers and stakeholders to unite in support of its passage.

Together, let us commit to its effective implementation for the benefit of our communities and future generations. I hereby strongly support the Bill. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Lingga.

YB Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor: Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Tuan Speaker: Waalaikumussalam.

YB Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor: First, I would like to express my gratitude to Tuan Speaker for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate on the second reading of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 which was presented by the Honourable Minister for Education, Innovation and Talent Development Sarawak and Investment and Member for N.20 Tarat.

Tuan Speaker, the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is not just a part of legislation; it's an enabling framework that directly supports the SBC's established mission, builds upon its existing achievements, and empowers it to realize its ambitious vision for the future of biodiversity management in Sarawak. These amendments equip the SBC with the necessary tools to continue its work in a rapidly evolving world, aligning its capabilities with Sarawak's broader economic and environmental goals.

Tuan Speaker, these amendments allowing the Council to create, own and commercialize intellectual property rights are essential for translating SBC's established research successes into tangible economic benefits for Sarawak. This allows SBC to build on past achievements and generate revenue for the future research and conservation.

SBC has already made significant strides in documenting and understanding Sarawak's biodiversity. By incentivizing the development of commercially viable products and services based on this research, this Bill creates a sustainable funding model for SBC, ensuring its long-term viability. This also fosters partnerships with industry and academia, further enhancing the impact of SBC's work. For example, last year July 2024, the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC), a leading institution under Thailand's National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) undertook a three-day collaborative visit to the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) focused research on genomes of algae collected in Sarawak. Through such partnerships, both SBC and BIOTEC continue to uphold their commitment to scientific excellence and innovation, driving progress and development globally.

This directly supports SBC's mission to "*undertake research and development of Sarawak's biological resources*" and its vision to be "*a leading centre for biodiversity research and conservation*". By commercializing research outcomes, SBC can better contribute to Sarawak's economic development while simultaneously promoting the sustainable use of its resources. Imagine SBC has successfully isolated a compound with medicinal properties. This amendment would allow them to patent the compound, license it to a pharmaceutical company, and use the royalties to fund further research into other promising natural resources.

This referring to the inclusion of new subsection 6(o), "*to create, develop, apply for, own and hold intellectual property rights arising out of research and development under this Ordinance, including those intellectual property rights transferred to and vested in the Council, and to enter into arrangements with any person, organization or institution for the commercial application of such intellectual property rights on such terms as to royalty, commission, fee, profit sharing scheme or other tangible*" can enable SBC's mission.

Tuan Speaker, the increased penalties for unauthorized collection or removal of protected resources are crucial for safeguarding SBC's past and ongoing investments in conservation and sustainable resource management. SBC has invested significantly in establishing protected areas,

promoting sustainable harvesting practices and educating local communities about the importance of biodiversity conservation. The higher penalties deter illegal activities that undermine these efforts, ensuring that SBC's work is not compromised by biopiracy or unsustainable exploitation.

This directly supports SBC's mission to "*promote the sustainable use of Sarawak's biological resources*" and its vision to "*conserve Sarawak's rich biodiversity for future generations*". Stronger enforcement mechanisms are essential for preventing the loss of valuable resources and maintaining the integrity of protected ecosystems. If SBC has successfully rehabilitated a degraded forest area, these stronger penalties would help prevent illegal logging or poaching that could undo their hard work.

Tuan Speaker, under new Section 6A (1) that states, "*the Council may, with the approval of the Minister, incorporate a company and subsidiaries thereof, by such name as the Council thinks fit, under the Companies Act 2016 [Act 777]—*". Therefore, by implementing this new section it will allow the Council to incorporate companies and manage seized items more effectively streamline administrative processes and improve SBC's ability to achieve its strategic goals, aligning its operational capabilities with its ambitious vision.

The power to incorporate allows SBC to establish specialized entities to focus on specific areas of research or commercialization, improving efficiency and accountability. This allows SBC to better leverage its resources and partnerships to achieve its strategic objectives.

This supports SBC's mission to "*facilitate collaboration among researchers, government agencies, and local communities*" and its vision to be "*a dynamic and responsive organization*". A more efficient and flexible administrative structure allows SBC to adapt to changing circumstances and effectively address emerging challenges. From this partnership, SBC could create a separate company to manage its intellectual property portfolio, allowing it to attract specialized expertise and maximize the value of its research findings.

Tuan Speaker, to conclude, the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is a critical enabler that empowers SBC to build upon its existing achievements, effectively pursue its mission, and realize its ambitious vision for the future of biodiversity management in Sarawak. By aligning its capabilities with Sarawak's broader economic and environmental goals, this Bill strengthens SBC's role as a leading force in conservation and sustainable development. The Bill is important to make sure that SBC will continue their important work. Therefore, I hereby fully support Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Bawang Assan.

YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025, tabled by the Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat.

Tuan Speaker, I would like to particularly refer to Section 4 (c)(o) which says, "*to create, develop apply for own and hold intellectual property rights arising out of the research and development*". I must say that this is a landmark provision allowing the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) to apply, own and hold intellectual property rights derived from its research and development (R&D) activities. Indeed, it is a forward-looking reform that will position Sarawak to capitalise on its biological assets through legal and commercial protection of innovation.

The Bill is to strengthen SBC's new property mandate by empowering SBC to apply for patents, trademarks and copyright to safeguard its scientific discoveries, traditional know how and natural product formulation from misappropriation or biopiracy.

On the other hand, intellectual property ownership will provide SBC with exclusive rights to license or sell its innovations paving for commercial ventures for a number of products, such as

plant-based cosmetics or nutraceuticals, biofuels and microbial technology or botanical drug development. In addition, holding intellectual property assets will strengthen SBC's position in technology transfer and joint ventures, ensuring higher value for Sarawak.

Moreover, intellectual property rights if well-managed can become strategic assets that will generate royalties, licensing fees and brand value. It will also raise Sarawak's innovation profile, making it more attractive to global bio-based investors and research collaborators. The move will also enable Sarawak to align with the key international protocols as mentioned by the minister such as the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing and with WIPO standards on traditional knowledge and genetic resources.

Tuan Speaker, all in all, this Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025, will transform SBC from the original research-based institution into legally empowered innovation authority. Tuan Speaker, by securing intellectual property rights over its research results and discoveries, SBC will ensure that Sarawak's biodiversity is not only protected but also leveraged for long-term economic as well as social value.

However, there are challenges which must be addressed. I think we must build intellectual property management capacity within SBC; we must create benefits-sharing policies; we must set up an intellectual property advisory board to guide commercialisation and lastly, we ought to ensure transparency in the licensing of our assets. Further, we must be aware that a corporate entity may operate with less transparency than a public institution raising concern about elite capture or even corruption.

We in Sarawak in a way may lack the technical expertise to manage complex biotech ventures risking reliance on foreign owners. And again, there may be overlapping mandates with the Federal Agencies, for example the Ministry of Environment, Federal Ministry of Environment. And this could create regulatory confusion. However, Tuan speaker, this Bill in summary will give SBC the tools to protect what we discovered and profit what we protect.

Tuan Speaker, let me move on to Section 5 of the Bill – Power to Incorporate Company. Our SBC has spent decades researching bioresources with strong potential in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, nutraceuticals; and biotechnologies. To incorporate the company will allow SBC to directly translate R&D into market ready products rather than relying on third party licensing or government grants. Through incorporated entities, SBC will enter joint ventures or public private partnerships attracting domestic and foreign investments in our bioeconomy.

Incorporated companies can generate revenue for SBC through products sales, royalty and equity states. However, Tuan Speaker, in commercialising the products, there must be strong governance framework. There must be strong governance framework to protect conflict of interest, misuse and abuse of the fund generated, and politicization of company operation.

Tuan Speaker, granting SBC the power to incorporate companies is indeed a forward-looking legislative reform that support innovation, economic growth and biodiversity ownership. It is a very bold step forward harnessing the state the so-called green gold for economic transformation. Indeed, it will transform SBC from a research-based institution into a bioeconomic catalysts. As we all know that we are home to one of the world's richest biotechnology treasures. Now, we are taking a bold, a landmark steps forwards to protect it and make it work profitably for our people. It opens the door to self-sustaining innovation ecosystem. But, as I said there must be strong institutional governance and strict adherence to equitable profit, a benefit-sharing principles.

With the above observations, Tuan Speaker, I would like to support the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Tebedu.

YB Dr Simon Sinang @ Sinang anak Bada: Thank you very much, Tuan Speaker, for the opportunity given to me standing before you in participating to debate and support the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the Minister for Education, Innovation and Talent Development, who is also the Honourable Member for N.20 Tarat for introducing this Bill called the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 this morning in this august House. The amendment to the Bill is appropriate and timely in line with the urgent needs and the demand of the government to go a step or to further empower the Sarawak Biodiversity Council and enhance their roles and functions.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak is so rich. We are so rich with biodiversity. The state made an excellent move by enacting this Sarawak Biodiversity Centre Ordinance, 1997 to safeguard and to protect our natural wealth in our flora, in our fauna in tandem or in line with the international call for sustainable Environmental, Social and Governance or ESG. The Sarawak Biodiversity Centre Ordinance that was enacted in 1997 and came into force on 1st January 1998 has successfully positioned Sarawak as a regional leader in biodiversity research, conservation and sustainable utilisation. It empowers SBC to document, to study and to commercialise the state rich biological resources. The Ordinance provides a legal framework for us to catalogue, to document and to preserve our Sarawak immense biodiversity.

Through, by prospecting and research, it ensures that our natural resources are not only protected but also utilized responsibly, contributing to conservation and preservation. SBC has contributed immensely to scientific and technological advancements through their various initiatives and valuable research on natural products, particularly local flora and potential applications in medicine, agriculture and cosmetics.

Tuan Speaker, the amendment to Section 2, Section 5, Section 6, Section 15, Section 22, Section 28 and Section 34 and inserting new Section 6A, new Section 29A and new Section 33A are necessary to improve the Principal Ordinance. This allows the insertion of Section 6 and new Section 29A and new Section 33A to empower the Council to perform their function to another level. The amendment to Section 6 opens the door for the Council to create, to develop, apply and own intellectual property rights for all the R&D under SBC and will help to protect the Council from the trap of biopiracy or the illegal practice offered commercially exploiting naturally occurring biochemical or genetic material especially by obtaining patterns that restrict its future used while failing to pay fair compensation to the community from where it originates.

Section 6A will allow the Council to incorporate a company, to commercialize the research funding done by SBC. It is hoped that this will attract both local and foreign investors to invest in Sarawak. This will greatly contribute and improve our social economic standing in line with our PCDS 2030. The ground breaking research and development leveraging of our abundant hydropower resources to support the nett zero and carbon plan, the SAF or Sustainable Aviation Fuel, developed from micro-algae is a classic example that requires the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre Ordinance to be amended accordingly to meet the current need and the requirement where the funding from this research could be commercialized to monetize their findings.

Tuan Speaker, R&D is a very expensive investment. It is right that this investment to be recoup, to be recovered and for the Council to be profit from their research and development. The partnering and collaboration with Mitsubishi Corporation has unloaded the full potential of outdoor algae cultivation.

Tuan Speaker, I'm very sure and I'm very certain that SBC has streams of good finding up their sleeves. We hope that this amendment will help to motivate our scientists to strive harder and to spur more interests to develop new and quality products from scientific research carried out at

SBC or any other collaborations with other institutions such as UNIMAS and any international corporations.

Tuan Speaker, the newly amended Ordinance seeking to impose a higher and harsher penalty and a longer jail term to both individual offenders and corporate offenders will surely act as a deterrent and prevention to all offenders and would be offenders. Thus, the amendments to Section 22, Section 28 and Section 24 including Section 35 and the insertion of a new Section 29A, a new Section 33A, are an integral and important part of the amendment to the Principal Ordinance.

Tuan Speaker, in conclusion, SBC was an important conservation tool. It was and still is our legal backbone to ensure that Sarawak's biodiversity became a source of our sustainable development and scientific progress. Today the amendment to the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 allows the Council to set a business entity will open-up more economic opportunities to investors both domestic and international business communities and collaborators and to stop and prevent biopiracy.

With that, with these arguments, reasons and justifications, Tuan Speaker, N.21 Tebedu begs to support the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you very much.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Ba' Kelalan.

YB Encik Baru Bian: Thank You, Tuan Speaker for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate on the proposed Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

It is with great pride and conviction that I rise today to lend my unwavering support to the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. This landmark legislation represents a bold and visionary step towards safeguarding Sarawak's unparalleled biodiversity, empowering our indigenous communities, and aligning our state with global standards of environmental and cultural stewardship.

This Bill is not merely an amendment to an existing Ordinance, but it is a testament to Sarawak's commitment to preserve its natural and cultural heritage while fostering sustainable development for all its people.

Empowering Indigenous Communities as Custodians of Our Forests

At the heart of this amendment lies a profound recognition of the indispensable role played by Sarawak's native communities, the true custodian of our forest, by giving the Council additional power under Section 6 of the Principal Ordinance and by inserting under the definition Section the word "*Native*" which has the same meaning assigned to it under the Interpretation Ordinance Sarawak, 2005.

Tuan Speaker, for generations, the indigenous communities have lived with harmony with the land, nurturing and protecting the rich biodiversity that defines Sarawak. Their traditional knowledge passed down through centuries offers invaluable insights into sustainable resource management from the use of medicinal plants to the preservation of sacred groves.

The proposed amendment ensures that these communities are not sidelined but are active participants in the governance and activities of the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre. By involving them in decision-making processes, we acknowledge the rightful place as stewards of our forests. This inclusion fosters a sense ownership, ensuring that conservation efforts are not imposed from above but are rooted in the wisdom and practices of those who know the land best. Furthermore, it strengthens social cohesion as our indigenous brothers and sisters are given a voice in shaping policies that affect their lives and livelihoods. This Bill, therefore, is as much about cultural justice as it is about environmental protection.

Strengthening Intellectual Property Rights for Biodiversity

Let me now turn to Clause 4 of the Bill, which introduces a new provision under Section 6(o) of the Principal Ordinance. This Clause empowers the Sarawak Biodiversity Council to “*create, develop, apply for, own, and hold intellectual property rights arising out of research and development under this Ordinance*”. It further allows the Council to enter into arrangements with individuals, organizations, or institutions for the commercial application of these rights, ensuring that benefits whether through royalties, commissions, fees, or profit-sharing schemes are equitably distributed.

This provision is a game changer. It recognizes that Sarawak’s biodiversity is not just an ecological asset but also a source of innovation and economic opportunity. From rare medicinal plants to unique genetic resources, our forests hold immense potential for scientific and commercial advancements. However, without proper safeguards, these resources could be exploited by external entities, leaving Sarawak and its people with little to show for it. By vesting intellectual property rights in the Council and enabling partnerships with indigenous communities, this amendment ensures that the benefits of biodiversity research flow back to Sarawakians, particularly our native communities.

For example, imagine a scenario where a pharmaceutical company seeks to develop a new drug based on a plant traditionally used by the Penan community. Under this amendment, the Council can negotiate terms that ensure the Penan receive fair compensation, whether through royalties or other tangible rewards. This not only protects our biodiversity from biopiracy but also creates a model of inclusive economic development. By empowering the Council to act as a guardian of these rights, we are building a framework that balances conservation with prosperity, ensuring that Sarawak’s natural wealth benefits its people first and foremost.

Aligning with International Standards and UNDRIP

I was particularly heartened by the Honourable Minister’s opening remarks, which highlighted the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a cornerstone of this amendment although it is not expressly incorporated in the Bill. FPIC, as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), ensures that indigenous communities are consulted and give their consent before any projects affecting their lands or resources are undertaken. While Malaysia has signed UNDRIP in 2007, it has yet to be fully endorsed by Parliament, rendering it non-binding in our national legal framework.

By upholding FPIC principle, Sarawak is taking a bold and progressive step towards adopting international best practices. This move places us at the forefront of ethical environmental governance, demonstrating our commitment to respecting the rights of our indigenous peoples. It also sends a powerful message to the global community; Sarawak is not only a biodiversity hotspot but also a leader in inclusive and rights-based conservation. By aligning with UNDRIP’s principles, we ensure that our policies are not only legally robust but also morally sound, fostering trust and collaboration with our indigenous communities.

Moreover, this alignment enhances Sarawak’s reputation on the global stage. As the world increasingly prioritizes sustainability and indigenous rights, Sarawak’s adoption of FPIC positions us as a model for other regions. It strengthens our case for international partnerships, funding, and recognition in global conservation efforts. This amendment, therefore, is not just a local reform but a strategic move to elevate Sarawak’s standing in the international arena.

Preserving Sarawak’s Rich Flora and Fauna

Finally, let us reflect on the extraordinary natural heritage that this Bill seeks to protect. Sarawak is home to one of the world’s most diverse ecosystems, with over 8,000 plant species, 250 mammal species, and countless other forms of life found nowhere else on earth. From the majestic hornbills soaring above our rainforest to the rare pitcher plants thriving in our highlands, our biodiversity is a source of pride and a global treasure. Yet this wealth is under threat from

deforestation, climate change and sustainable practices. The Sarawak Biodiversity Centre, strengthened by these amendments, will be better equipped to address these challenges through research, conservation and sustainable management by spending at the Centre's mandate the resources, we ensure that our flora and fauna are protected not just for their ecological value but also for their cultural and economic significance. This Bill is a pledge to future generations that we will leave them a Sarawak as vibrant and biodiverse as the one we inherited.

Tuan Speaker, the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025, is a visionary piece of legislation that embodies the principle of inclusion, sustainability and global responsibility. It empowers our indigenous community as partners in conservation, protects our biodiversity through robust intellectual property frameworks, aligns Sarawak with international standard and safeguards our rich flora and fauna for generations to come. This Bill is a testament to Sarawak forward thinking leadership and its unwavering commitment to balancing environmental preservation with cultural and economic progress.

I urge the Honourable Members of this House to lend their support to this amendment and let us stand together to protect Sarawak natural and cultural heritage ensuring that our forests, our wildlife and our people thrive in harmony. Together we can make Sarawak a beacon of biodiversity conservation and indigenous empowerment. Ba'kelalan strongly supports this Bill. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Any other Honourable Members who wish to speak? Honourable Member for Batu Kitang.

YB Dato Ir. Lo Khare Chiang: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Thank you for this opportunity to debate on the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

I rise to support the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill 2025 which is a timely initiative that seeks to strengthen our framework for the protection, management and the commercialization of Sarawak rich biodiversity resources. This Bill serves a few purposes, including:

- (a) One, clarifying the role of naturalists and experts. The Bill updates the terminology and scope concerning naturalists and biodiversity experts involved in the Centre's operations. It provides legal clarity for individuals who may not hold formal scientific credentials but possess deep traditional and indigenous knowledge. These individuals play an important role in the documentation and the preservation of local biodiversity and cultural practices. By recognizing their contributions through formal legal language, we strengthen community engagement as well as respect for indigenous knowledge systems.
- (b) Secondly, the amendment empowers Sarawak Biodiversity Centre to establish corporate or profit orientated entities. This provision enables SBC to engage in commercialization of research and innovation, developing pharmaceutical products, natural extracts and biotechnological applications based on Sarawak's biodiversity. This strategic move aligns with Sarawak's vision to build a bioeconomy and ensure that our natural assets translate into tangible benefits for the state, our researchers and our communities.
- (c) Thirdly, the Bill introduces enhanced benefit sharing provisions and stricter financial penalties. We are putting in place mechanisms to ensure that any commercial gains from biodiversity resources are equitably shared with their rightful stakeholders especially the indigenous communities who have preserved this knowledge for generations. This Bill also introduces a clear financial penalty framework. This is a matter of policy which ensures that unauthorized exploitation or misuse of Sarawak's biological resources will be met with firm legal consequences, and this is important which signals our seriousness in safeguarding biodiversity from exploitation.

Tuan speaker, this amendment is not merely administrative. It is a part of a broader vision to position Sarawak as a leader in biodiversity research while ensuring that our resources are protected, respected and benefits our people.

As someone deeply involved in community development, I fully support this Bill particularly the provisions that protect indigenous rights, encourage scientific commercial partnership and impose responsible environmental governance. With that, I give my full support to the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Any other Members who wish to speak? Now I call upon the Honourable Minister to do the winding up.

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn): Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Firstly, I wish to thank all the Honourable Members who have debated on this Bill. There are 10 of them. Thank you to the Honourable Member for Murum, Tellian, Kota Sentosa, *ini dari bandar sampai ke desa, dari Kota Sentosa juga*, Tamin, Meluan, Lingga, Bawang Assan, Tebedu, Ba'Kelalan and Batu Lintang. Semuanya hebat hebat. Terima kasih kerana menyokong pindaan ini.

But let, I must take SBC out of the lab so that we know at least what they have been doing and why with all these ordinances that we have introduced for many years including this amendment is very important. On the benefit sharing agreements that were signed, so that there is an indication, SBC has signed three benefit sharing agreements with 11 ethnic communities in Sarawak. These are:

- (a) This is a brand name so nobody should breach the copyright. LitSara® (newly registered) is the project that was signed with six communities. Namely, the Bidayuh from Kampung Kiding in Padawan, Kuching, the Kelabits from Pa'Ukat and Pa'Lungan in Bario, Miri and the Lun Bawang from Long Kerebangan, Long Telingan & Long Rusu in Lawas, Limbang.
- (b) AdenoSara® a project which was signed with two communities. Namely, the Bidayuh from Kampung Semadang, in Penrissen, Kuching and the Iban from Rumah Simon, Lubok Antu, Sri Aman.
- (c) MadhuSara® (this is M.A.D.H.U Sara) project which was signed with three Melanau communities from Kampung Jemoreng Hulu, Jemoreng Hilir in Matu and Kampung Penibong in Daro.

These communities have benefited from the sales of essential oil and edible oil and royalties from the sales of products:

- (a) LitSara® from the year 2017, these are accumulative to 2024 - RM1,812,000;
- (b) AdenoSara® from 2020-2024 RM34,500; and
- (c) MadhuSara® 2023-2024-RM62,800.

On top of the monetary benefits, these communities also received non-monetary benefits in the form of capacity building and facilities for distillation. Now, the type of products that were produced. I want to promote also in this Dewan so that we know it when we see it in the market which are:

- (a) LitSara® there are 10 products or types:
 - (i) Essential oils;
 - (ii) air freshener;
 - (iii) hand sanitizer;

- (iv) liquid handwash;
- (v) body wash;
- (vi) shampoo;
- (vii) conditioner;
- (viii) bar soap;
- (ix) bar oil; and
- (x) biodegradable wipes

(b) AdenoSara® two product types:

- (i) Essential oil; and
- (ii) pet shampoo; and

(c) NatureSara® six product types:

- (i) Body lotion;
- (ii) Shampoo;
- (iii) Conditioner;
- (iv) linen spray;
- (v) body oil; and
- (vi) biodegradable wipes

I must inform that research into all this research and development; it is a very expensive affair. It costs money but we are able to enter collaborations with other entities. So far, we have:

- (a) 130 Non-disclosure agreements (so I cannot disclose to you);
- (b) 62 Material transfer agreements;
- (c) 27 Memorandum of Understanding;
- (d) 6 Collaboration agreements;
- (e) 1 Patent licensing agreements; and
- (f) 2 Facility use agreements.

These are expensive. Sometimes it is not easy to get people to collaborate with us because it costs a lot of money. They also come out with the funding and to give you an indication, the notable ones:

- (a) PepsiCo they are funded also RM2.68 mil;
- (b) Mitsubishi Corporation have funded us RM8.86 mil;
- (c) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), their five (5) projects – RM2.60 mil;
- (d) New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization or (NEDO) – RM4.33 mil; and
- (e) Diamond Gas Holdings Sdn. Bhd. – RM6.25mil.

These are the collaboration we have with them (not the only one but the notable one). So, we hope all this will bring us better development.

Now, with this Amendment Bill, we hope that it will enhance enforcement and penalties to deter biodiversity tapes in bio fencing to ensure that our rich biodiversity is well guarded, appropriately utilized, and through research and development. It also gives opportunities for our own people to do various work on research and development and through patent copyrights, trademarks and licensing it will ensure SBC has control over commercial development. The whole world is standing to nature for healing and long life. Hence, mostly the whole world is looking into the natural world for cures, that means the biodiversity that we have in the forest. And, to show that the world is also serious about this, we have conventions and protocols by the United Nation itself and also, the Nagoya Protocol.

I welcome the matters raised by the Honourable Members, especially the one from the Honourable Member for Bawang Assan on the challenges. We will always face the challenges that SBC will face. Be rest assured that SBC will certainly upgrade their intellectual progress to overcome challenges. They have gone through all these and many lesson learnt and many things also will really upgrade them through a higher level.

On the formation of the company, it is still a government-linked company. So, it is subject to reporting and auditing by the government. So, we can ensure that whatever business they are doing it must be for the benefit of the *rakyat*. Once again Tuan Speaker, with those comments, I want to thank all the members who had debated and lent their support to the Bill and to those who didn't speak, but I know you are supporting also, after this just say yes ok. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the question before the Dewan is that the Motion standing in the Order Paper in the name of the Honourable Member for Education, Innovation and Talent Development and Member for N.20 Tarat be referred to the Committee of the Whole House. As many as are of the opinion say "Yes".

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Speaker: As many as are of the contrary say "No". The "Yes" have it. The Motion is passed and referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Tuan Speaker: The Dewan shall now resolve into the Committee of the Whole House to consider the Bill which stands committed to the committee.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

[Tuan Pengerusi mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Tuan Pengerusi: The Dewan shall now consider the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Clauses 1 to 12

Tuan Pengerusi: The question is that Clauses 1 to 12 are ordered to stand part of the Bill. As many as are of the opinion say "Yes".

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Pengerusi: As many as are of the contrary opinion say "No". The "Yes" have it. Clauses 1 to 12 are ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Enacting Clauses and Title

Tuan Pengerusi: The Dewan shall now resume.

HOUSE RESUMED

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.20 Tarat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn): Tuan Speaker, the Bill has been referred to the Committee of the Whole House and agreed to without amendments.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KETIGA

SARAWAK BIODIVERSITY CENTRE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Menteri Pendidikan, Inovasi dan Pembangunan Bakat (YB Dato Sri Roland Sagah Wee Inn): Tuan Speaker, I beg to move that the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be now read the third time and do pass.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the question before the Dewan is that the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read a third time and do pass. As many as are of the opinion say “Yes”.

Government: Yes... (Resounding “Yes”)

Tuan Speaker: As many as are of the contrary opinion say “No”. The “Yes” have it. The Bill is read a third time and passed.

Bill is read a third time and passed.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, we have a lunch break. Sitting resumes at 2.30 p.m.

(Mesyuarat ditangguhkan pada pukul 12.44 tengah hari)

(Mesyuarat dimulakan pada pukul 2.36 petang)

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan mesyuarat]

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KEDUA

LAND CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak, Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan): Tuan Speaker, I beg to move that the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 to be read a second time. The amendments as proposed in this Bill are timely and necessary in view of the State’s evolving socio-economic landscape, increased development demands, and the growing complexity of land management and land administration. These amendments are intended to streamline operational processes, enhance enforcement powers, refine planning policies, and incorporate digital innovations. In doing so, the state seeks to modernise and future-proof its land governance framework. By improving administrative efficiency and enhanced legal clarity, this Bill lays the foundation for a land management and land administration system that is transparent, accountable, and responsive. A system that aligns with Sarawak’s long-term development strategies and raises the standard of public service delivery.

This Bill will equip Sarawak with the adaptability required to respond effectively to emerging challenges in land governance, while supporting sustainable development and aligning with Sarawak’s broader economic and social aspirations. At a time of rapid urban growth, technological advancement, and rising public expectations, this Bill is a crucial step toward laying the groundwork for the future of our land management and land administration. It will create a system that is more responsive, transparent, and service-oriented – one that truly meets the needs of landowners, investors, Sarawak civil servants, local communities, and the *rakyat* as a whole.

THE AMENDMENT

Tuan Speaker, the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 introduces significant changes across multiple parts of the existing legislation, ensuring that Sarawak’s land management and land

administration system remains efficient, adaptable, and aligned with the current best practices in land governance and regulatory administration.

These amendments involve 24 sections, along with the introduction of three new sections, covering key areas of land management and land administration, legal interpretations, enforcement mechanisms, and digital transformation. It is structured into four key categories, each addressing essential aspects of Sarawak's evolving governance framework.

These categories include changes in functions, procedures, and work processes; updates to definitions and policies; enhancements to enforcement and compliance measures; and the integration of technological advancements to modernize land management and land administration.

The amendments also aim to streamline operations, simplify procedures, and standardize processes in alignment with digital service delivery initiatives aimed at supporting the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030) and the Sarawak Digital Economy Blueprint 2030.

The provisions introduced through this Bill are intended to strengthen Sarawak's land governance framework by updating current administrative practices and clearer policy direction. Notably, the amendments also introduce a strengthened enforcement mechanisms within the Land Code, empowering the enforcement authorities to act swiftly and decisively against non-compliance, encroachments and illegal occupations.

SALIENT FEATURES

The Bill introduces amendments to Section 32A which is aimed at significantly expanding the scope of regulation over rock materials. Where the original provision only prohibited the removal of rock materials without lawful authority, the amended section now also includes their extraction and transportation. This ensures that all stages of handling, from on-site removal to off-site transit, requires proper licensing.

The penalties have been substantially increased, imposing fines between RM50,000 and RM500,000 or imprisonment up to five years, or both. Additionally, new subsections introduce a legal presumption of guilt for anyone found in possession of rock materials, making enforcement more effective. Courts are now also required to order a person convicted of the offence to pay to the Government a sum of at least 10 times the royalty or payments due, with amounts recoverable as civil debt.

Complementing these changes, the newly inserted Section 32AA addresses a previously unregulated gap: the transportation of rock materials out of Sarawak. This new section prohibits any person from transporting rock material beyond the state's borders without a specific license issued by the Director of Land and Survey. Any person found transporting rock materials out of Sarawak without a valid license, or in breach of license conditions, face a minimum fine of RM100,000, up to RM1 million, or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

Together, Sections 32A and 32AA form a comprehensive legal framework to regulate the extraction, internal movement, and external export of rock materials, safeguarding the state's resources and strengthening revenue collection mechanisms.

Equally important is the introduction of Section 171A, which provides a formal mechanism for the registration of *wakaf* or religious endowment lands in the Land Registry. This amendment empowers individuals and Majlis Islam Sarawak to apply for such registrations and extends similar provisions to other religions that have equivalent concepts. This marks a progressive and inclusive step forward, reflecting Sarawak's commitment to safeguard the rich diversity of religious faith within its multicultural society.

To strengthen the state's enforcement capabilities, Section 209 has been amended to provide enhanced penalties for the unlawful occupation, cultivation, and clearing of State land. Any person who commits such offence is now liable to a fine of up to RM500,000 or imprisonment for a term of up to five years.

Section 230 has also been revised to increase penalties for the subdivision and development of land without proper approval, with fines of up to RM3 million and an additional daily penalty of RM5,000 for continuing offences.

In addition, the scope of enforcement has been broadened through amendments to Sections 209A and 209B, which relate to powers of arrest, eviction, and seizure, ensuring consistent and effective enforcement across the entire Land Code.

Tuan Speaker, the role of assessors in land reference cases has also been clarified where sections 63 and 65 now require that the opinions of assessors be formally recorded, whether delivered orally or in writing, and their fees will be prescribed by the rules. This enhances transparency and ensures their contributions are formally recognized in the judicial process.

A series of administrative and procedural enhancements have also been introduced. For example, Section 128 now eases the process of the display of notices for loss of titles. The process had been simplified to ensure timely service delivery where notice for lost titles would be displayed at both the Superintendent's and District offices of where the land is located in. This is to ensure that the issuance of duplicate titles is expedited.

Section 208 is amended to give power to the Director, with the approval of the Minister, to direct the manner in which any notice is to be delivered or dispensed with, in addition to the existing powers conferred to the court of competent jurisdiction.

Section 215 is amended to enable Magistrate to attest any instrument executed under the Code and the amendment also empowers the Director to determine the manner and period of general authorization given under Section 215(1)(a).

Tuan Speaker, in our commitment to leverage technology for efficient governance and service delivery, Section 234 is amended to enable the digital submission of documents where the requirement of physical copies to be submitted is no longer required. This is also in alignment with our goal of a more efficient and towards a paperless land management and land administration system.

The amendments also incorporate the new functions of the State Planning Authority (SPA). Under Section 229, the SPA is now empowered to impose levies, fees, and contributions related to sub-division and development approvals. Section 248 grants the SPA the authority to make rules regarding such charges, as well as the submission of utilities survey plans and other related matters, ensuring robust planning and coordinated development.

In support of infrastructure coordination, Section 232 now requires developers to submit comprehensive utility plans, including layouts for water, electricity, gas, and telecommunications. This will ensure a better integration of utility services from the earliest stages of planning.

Additionally, the newly inserted Section 234A mandates the submission of as-built utility surveys after project completion. This critical data will support the state's efforts in utility mapping, long-term maintenance and planning integration.

Tuan Speaker, the salient features of the Bill that I have just outlined, demonstrate the government's unwavering commitment to ensure that the Sarawak Land Code remains effective, responsive, and future-ready in supporting Sarawak's sustainable and well-regulated development. The other features of the Bill are as stated in the Explanatory Statements to the Bill.

CONCLUSION

Tuan Speaker, as Sarawak advances toward high income economy and sustainable development guided by *Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS) 2030* and the *Sarawak Digital Economy Blueprint 2030*, it is essential that our land governance framework evolves to meet modern challenges and future demands. The law should be dynamic in nature, adapting to the rapid evolution of technology and the accelerating pace of physical and economic development.

I, therefore, urge the Honourable Members to give your full support to this Bill. In doing so, this will ensure that Sarawak remains on the path of equitable and sustainable progress.

With that, Tuan Speaker, I beg to move this Bill.

Tuan Speaker: Another Minister to second.

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Tuan Speaker, I beg to second.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, before I call the Members to take part on the debate; I wish to remind that this is the Amendment Bill, so under Standing Order 32(1), please confine your observation to the amendments only without opening up the entire Land Code. Under 31(8), I rule that all speeches are given maximum of 15 minutes. The Honourable Member for Padungan.

YB Encik Chong Chieng Jen: Thank you, Tuan Speaker for giving me this opportunity to debate in the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. I have three parts in my debate touching on the Amendment Bill. The first part is about the Clause 3; seeking to amend Section 32A which imposes a heavy sentence on those who extract, remove or transport rocks material without a license. I do agree that for the extraction of rocks from its natural habitat; there should be a license to issue so that Land & Survey can regulate the amount of rocks to be removed and also the landscape.

However, i will plead leniency for those who have to found to be transporting those rocks from the quarry to the buyer. Why I say so? Because most of those transporter they are lorry owner driver where there have only one lorry and they are almost daily workers. With this Amendment Bill, if they are found to have a rocks on their lorry carrying rocks, they will be presumed to have, extracted with knowledge and removing with knowledge that there is no licence given to quarry operator. In most of the circumstances, these lorry drivers, they do not even have the bargaining power to demand the quarry owners to show the lorry driver “*hey, do you have a permit to extract rocks*”. Because of this unequal bargaining power, they are at the mercy of the quarry owner or the buyer of the rocks. Therefore, i will plead leniency for this group of people, the transporters who are at the mercy of either the quarry owner or the buyer of the rocks when it comes to enforcement. So that, they will not be excessively penalised because most of them are daily workers, daily earners and they cannot afford such a hefty fine.

Second issue relates to the Clause 9 of the Amendment Bill which seeks to introduce a new section 171A into the Land Code. This amendment touches one key fundamental principle of our State Constitution and the State Government. This clause seeks to import the concept of *wakaf* or endowment into the Land Code and I will read up the Clause 171A:

- (1) Any person who has rights and interests on any land may lodge an application to declare such land as *wakaf* or endowment, in accordance with the rules made under section 213, subject to the conditions or requirement in any written law.
- (2) In the case of land identified as *wakaf* under the Majlis Islam Sarawak Ordinance, 2001 [Cap.41], the application to declare such land as *wakaf* may be lodged by the Majlis Islam Sarawak.

- (3) Subsection (1) shall apply to any endowment made under any other religion having the same concept of *wakaf* which is to be regulated by the relevant law and body identified under such religion.

Tuan Speaker, for the first time in the history of Sarawak, the Government is seeking to import religious element into the Sarawak Land Code which is a law of general application to all persons professing different religions.

To me, this goes against the very fundamental constitutional framework of Sarawak, that Sarawak is a secular State. As opposed to the Federal Constitution which provides that “*Islam is the religion of the Federation*”, the Constitution of the State of Sarawak does not provide any religion to be the religion of the state. As such, we in Sarawak do not have an official religion. All the more, we should keep religion out of laws which have a general application to all the people, of which the Sarawak Land Code is one.

So far, the State Government has kept religion away from the general administration of the government and that is good. It helps to preserve the racial harmony that we enjoy thus far.

By introducing the concept of “*Wakaf*” into the Land Code today, the Government is setting the precedent of Islamic doctrine and religious ideology to be incorporated into a law of general application to all. This will have a serious implication in future and for generations to come.

Tuan Speaker, I no question, I no problem with any religion and its ideology and teaching, be it Islam, Christianity and Buddhism. I believe that all religions teach us to fear the divine power and to do good. But I am also a firm believer that religious ideologies should be kept away from the realms of law and governance. The racial disharmony and tension in West Malaysia are due, to a large extent, to the fact that the two, government and religion, have intertwined too much. I loathe to see the day that Sarawak goes down that path.

Besides, the ideological implication of this *wakaf* thing introduction of *wakaf* into the Land Code. There are also practical difficulties in the introduction and application of the “*wakaf*” concept in the Land Code.

Firstly, the word “*wakaf*” is not defined in the Land Code. To our Muslim friends, it may be a common word, but to the non-Muslims, “*wakaf*” is not so widely understood. Even before I stand today to debate, I have to make references, I have to google search and I have to make references to the Majlis Islam Sarawak Ordinance, 2001 to ascertain the definition of *wakaf*.

And there I find two definitions of *wakaf*:

- 1) “*wakaf am*” means a dedication in perpetuity of the capital and income of property for religious or charitable purposes recognised by Islamic Law and the property so dedicated; and
- 2) “*wakaf khas*” means a dedication in perpetuity, or for a limited period, of the capital of property for religious or charitable purposes recognised by Islamic Law and the property so dedicated, the benefit and income of the property being given to specific persons or for purposes prescribed in the *wakaf*.

Now the key differences are that one is a dedication in perpetuity, and one is dedication in perpetuity or limited period. For further clarification and determination in the interpretation of the word *wakaf* in the Land Code, one might have to seek the interpretation from the Majlis Islam Sarawak or the Lembaga Fatwa, as provided in the Majlis Islam Sarawak Ordinance. Rather than seeking clarification in the court of law now you have to seek clarification on how to interpret certain provision in the land code through a Fatwa Council.

Secondly, what would become of the status of the land after it has been declared as *wakaf*? Would the land be converted from “Mixed Zone Land” to “Native Land”? Can the *wakaf* land be developed or sold and the proceeds be kept by the trustee for the charitable purpose for which the land was dedicated? All these are silence in the proposed amendment.

Thirdly, which is more importantly, in the event that there is a competing claim over a parcel of land declared as *wakaf* and one of the claimants or few of the claimants are not a muslim, would Islamic Law be applicable or civil law? Would the challenge by the non-Muslim on the declaration of *wakaf* be then regarded as a challenge against the religion? And where it would file action? Would it be Civil Court or Shariah Court? There may be even an issue *yeah*, the issue of where to file the challenge. I take, I give an example, Tuan Speaker, a land owned by A who is the eldest in the family of five brothers. The land was inherited by the father to A and the siblings, but it was register in the name of A. And the siblings come and try to make claim saying that, this is the father’s land is given to all of us although you are the registered owner we have interest. And after a few exchanges of opinions or arguments, A apply and declare the land to be *wakaf* because A has been converted to muslim. Then he apply and declare the land as *wakaf*. Then his siblings’ brothers the four of them are going to challenge. That declaration and registration as a *wakaf*. This is what we call the conflict of law.

Such conflict in the application of Civil Law and Islamic Law has not only created much legal argument but at times it can be a very divisive issue in a multi-racial and multi-religious society like Sarawak. It has become one very emotive and sensitive issue in West Malaysia.

Under the current Land Code, if anyone wishes to donate his/or her land for charitable purposes or for any religious purpose, ie. to build a mosque, a masjid, a church or temple, it can be done. His/her land can be transferred to and registered in the names of the relevant organisation for such purposes. Special condition on the land-use can be endorsed on the title deeds for such purposes. There is thus no need to amend and introduce the religious concept into our Land Code via this amendment.

As such, I would propose that Clause 9 of this Bill and part of Clause 14 seeking to introduce the new sub-section (1)(n) relating to regulating on the procedure for *wakaf* or endowment be removed from the Amendment Bill.

Tuan Speaker, the Sarawak Land Code is a secular law and should remain so. Any attempt to import religious element into this piece of secular legislation will go against the original intention of our state’s founding fathers and the spirit of MA63.

On the issue of administering the creation, management of *wakaf*, rather than amending the Sarawak Land Code via this amendment Bill, it will be more proper that the State Government introduce a new bill regulating all *wakaf* matters not only *wakaf* but also non-muslim charitable trust, a comprehensive bill, two comprehensive bills to regulate this matter and for the *wakaf* Bill it can modelled after the India’s Waqf Act 1995...India’s wakaf is spelled as Waqf....Waqf Act 1995 amended in 2025. That is in respect of Clause 9 of the Amendment Bill.

Now, I will go into the last part of my observations on the amendment. That would be the development act, the development plan which appears in clause I believe Clause 16, 17, 18 on the development plan.

Tuan Speaker, land prices has become so expensive now in Kuching. Such that most of the developers who buy a plot of land in heart of the city or nearby within the city vicinity they have to build condominiums or high-rise buildings in order to return their profit earn profit from their development of the land. As such they create disruption to the existing residence. When you build high rise buildings next to a semidetached house or next to terrace house, definitely it creates disruption. But we need development. Therefore, there are always conflict between the developer and the existing residence. Now the government, the role of the government is how to facilitate, how

to negotiate, how to mediate between these two interested parties. One, is someone who has stay there for maybe 10 years, 30 years or the rest of his life.

Another one is the newcomer who built condominiums, high rise building and in the cause of development, it is unavoidable, but we should minimize the destruction of this such a matter.

Therefore, I propose that in the approval of the funding of this development plan, the government should adopt least destructive consideration for the approval plan and in this respect, I would like to highlight one particular incident which is the RISE Residence at Jalan Hati, RISE as in R. I. S. E., Rise Residence in Jalan Hati, under construction. The plan that was approved by the SPA and the Council is that, the rubbish collection centre of the condominium is located right in the doorstep of the existing residence houses of Lorong Hati 2. Imagine you have a few hundred households throwing the rubbish and all the rubbish should be collected and deposited in front of your household and that will go on every day, Tuan Speaker, the stench, the discomfort that existing residence of Lorong Hati 2, you can imagine, it is just unbearable. They sought help to the council, to the Land and Survey but to no avail.

Today, I bring up this issue and plea with the Minister concern and Honourable Deputy Premier that the SPA can just amend the drawing a bit, the approval a bit, to locate the Rubbish Collection Disposal Centre of that condominium to a place that will not affect any existing residence. After all, that condominium sits on top of land that is more than one acre. Definitely, there is some place along the main road or something that, someplace, that fronting not existing residence area, can be accommodated. So, therefore I plead with the Minister to look into that and also on the part of the development plan.

Tuan Speaker, I uphold the State Government's policy in imposing housing financial contribution, i.e. if a developer wishes to develop land of more than 10 acres into a housing estate, he has to contribute certain financial contributions to the state where the state will use the money to build affordable houses for the poor and less fortune.

However, in the implementation of this policy, there is some aspect of which needs ought to be punctuated. The existing policy, any land between 10 acres to 13.5 acres, to develop such a land, the developer will have to contribute an amount which is equivalent to 1.3 unit of affordable houses per acre and one unit of affordable house is price at RM110 thousand i.e. if I have a 10 acres land, to develop that into a housing estate, I would have to pay RM130 thousand per acre roughly, RM130 thousand per acre.

Tuan Speaker, the policy may be good, but I think it needs to be punctuated because the land prices in the city of Kuching are very luxury. Land in the city of Kuching up to the 3rd mile, the 4th mile in certain location could fetch the price of one-acre RM8 million, RM10 million also, even RM10 million but certain areas like the Moyan areas, Matang areas. Although there are also classified, categorized within Kuching town, there are town land, i.e. town land but the market price of these land in those area could only fetch about RM300 thousand, RM400 thousand... *(Interruption)*...

Tuan Speaker: Ahli Yang Berhormat, you have to conclude, you have to conclude.

YB Encik Chong Chieng Jen: Yes Tuan Speaker, I will wind up this point and I will finish, I will finish mine.

Tuan Speaker: You are in which section?

YB Encik Chong Chieng Jen: Development Plan. Development Plan which is Clause 20 on the consideration to approve development plan. So, for land which costs RM10 million an acre, the imposition of RM1.3 million is just about 1% additional costs, 10% additional costs. But for a land, sorry, can I, I just, you see you disturb my thoughts. Okay, for a part of land, 10 acres costing, maybe, one acre, RM5 million; 10 acres, RM50 million alright.

To develop that, the government imposes RM1.3 million levy or housing contribution, financial contributions. It cost about less than 2% of the land cost. But, for a piece of land in Moyan, Batu Kawa which costs about RM500 thousand per acre, which is RM5 million 10 acres. The imposition of RM1.3 million on the 10 acre of development cost about 25% of the land cost.

Tuan Speaker: You need to conclude.

YB Encik Chong Chieng Yen: it is quite hard to flat a rate across all land in Kuching. So therefore, Tuan Speaker, I call upon the Honourable Minister to find tune to this financial contribution for developers so that the developers will not be overburdened with this cause impose upon them to develop houses especially on the outskirts of Kuching or Sibu or other major cities. With that, I conclude. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speakers: Member of Daro.

YB Encik Safiee bin Haji Ahmad: Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam sejahtera, Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur dan *Salam Seguai Sejalai*. First and foremost, thank you Tuan Speaker for granting me the opportunity to take part in today's debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 that was presented by Deputy Premier, YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan, Second Minister for Natural Resources and Urban Development; Minister for International Trade, Industry and Investment; and also Member for N.82 Bukit Sari.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak is definitely has set an exemplary figure to all the States in Malaysia when it comes to efficient governance, thanks to our far-sighted leader, YAB Premier Sarawak who had set a clear vision to make Sarawak as a developed and high-income state by year 2030. Having this clear vision comes with the responsibility in forging and developing clear policy in order to be relevant, remain sustainable and ensuring Sarawak is on the right track.

Tuan Speaker, I stand today in full support of the proposed amendments which mark an essential and timely step in modernizing Sarawak's land management and land administration system. These reforms are not only about updating procedures, they are about building a more efficient, transparent, and future ready framework that will better serve the people and development goals of our state.

Tuan Speaker, as we strive to position Sarawak as a digital leader and a model of good governance, the proposed amendments will streamline functions, simplify outdated procedures and standardization work processes to reflect our current operational realities. One of the most impactful changes is the formal recognition of electronic systems such as the eSPA System, a major shift that allows for online submission of applications and plans, eliminating the need for physical paperwork and reducing processing times significantly.

The amendments also introduce more practical procedures for serving notices and expedited issuance of duplicate titles which will greatly benefit the public and reduce administrative backlogs. on top of that, the extension of responsibilities from Surveyors and Valuers to other relevant officers in compensation matters brings much needed flexibility and responsiveness to our land administration system. The role of the State Planning Authority (SPA) is significantly strengthened through the introduction of a legal definition of development plan. This gives the Authority a clearer mandate and stronger legal backing to regulate and guide land development in a planned and sustainable manner. Additionally, the Authority is now empowered to impose levy, fees, contributions and other charges which provides a flexible and responsive financial mechanism to support planning, infrastructure and enforcement activities. Most notably the inclusion of the terms "*any person*" in the amendments ensures that all stakeholders including government departments and agencies are held accountable to planning requirements. This marks a shift towards greater equity and consistency in enforcement where public and private sectors are subject to the same rules and expectations.

Tuan Speaker, the proposed amendments introduce clear and enforceable provisions to regulate the transportation of rock materials out of Sarawak. This is a critical step in ensuring that our natural resources are responsibly managed and that Sarawak's rightful revenue from these resources is properly collected. By making licensing requirements legally enforceable and enabling the effective collection of fees and royalties, we are protecting not only our environment but also the economic interests of the state. This move conveys a clear and firm message that the illegal extraction and transport of rock materials will not be condoned and that all operators, whether from the public or private sector, are required to adhere strictly to established procedures. This introduction of stringent penalties through the amendments serves as a critical deterrent against unlawful activities and deplete the state's natural resources. It is imperative that the law remains resolute and that its enforcement is both consistent and credible.

Tuan Speaker, equally significant is the introduction of a new legal framework to govern matters relating to *wakaf* and endowment which is intended to formalise the registration and management of wakaf and endowment lands, not in a way that is exclusive to any one religion, but within the inclusive intent of accommodating all religions practiced in Sarawak. Under this framework, landowners who wish to endow or dedicate their lands for religious or welfare purposes will now have a clear, efficient, and legally secure pathway to do so. No more unnecessary red tape and most importantly, the noble intentions of landowners will no longer be hindered by legal uncertainty.

Sarawak, as we all know, is a land of many cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Our strength lies in our ability to live together in peace despite our differences. Therefore, it is only fitting that our laws evolve to reflect this multi-religious and multicultural to ensure that such contributions are safeguarded and properly utilised for the benefit of the future generations.

The approval periods for development proposals are now aligned with updated policies of the State Planning Authority (SPA). This brings greater certainty and efficiency into the planning process, reducing unnecessary delays and improving transparency.

Additionally, the amendments introduce a new requirement for the submission of as-built utility data, the progressive step that supports the creation of a 3D utility mapping framework and the formation of dedicated committees. This is not just about data, it is about building the foundation for integrated spatial planning, underground infrastructure management, and ultimately, the Smart City vision of Sarawak. With accurate, real-time utility data, we can plan more intelligently, prevent costly infrastructure clashes, and build more sustainable urban centres.

Tuan Speaker, lastly, terminological updates, such as broadening the references to parking spaces may seem trivial, but they reflect our commitment to ensure that the Land Code is inclusive, adaptable, and responsive to current and future land use trends. It ensures that our laws remain dynamic and relevant to the needs of modern urban development.

These updates to definitions and policies are not cosmetic, they are strategic. They demonstrate Sarawak's commitment to responsible land management and land administration, inclusive legal framework and smart development planning.

To wind up my speech, this Bill shows Sarawak's commitment and definitely the collective will and effort in ensuring Sarawak is being governed efficiently. With that being said, Tuan Speaker, I fully support The Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Balingian.

YB Encik Abdul Yakub bin Haji Arbi: Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Salam sejahtera, *Salam Segulai Sejalai*. Thank you, Tuan Speaker, and thank you for granting the floor. Much obliged for the opportunity to contribute to this important debate. I rise today in strong support of the proposed amendment of the Land Code which seeks to enhance enforcement and compliance

mechanism in Sarawak land governance framework and its pivotal move towards modernizing our land management and land administration through digital transformation.

Enhancing Enforcement Compliance

These amendments are both timely and necessary. As land related offences such as illegal occupation, encroachment, and resources extraction continue to rise. It is imperative that the law evolve to empower our enforcement agencies to act swiftly and efficiently. The introduction of more robust enforcement mechanism we allow the authorities to address non-compliance decisively, thus, protecting the integrity of Sarawak's land assets and ensuring fairness for lawful landowners and stakeholders.

One of the most critical updates involve in strengthening licensing requirements penalties for the extraction, possession and transportation of rock materials particularly when these materials are moved beyond Sarawak's borders. The current maximum penalty of RM5,000 is outdated and no longer serves us as an offensive deterrent. In fact, the economic gained from illegal extraction far outweigh this penalty, making it financially worthwhile for offenders to break the law.

Similarly, the issue of unlawful occupation, cultivation, and clearing of the State land presents serious long-term implications. Not only does it disrupt planned land use and development, but it also threatens environmental sustainability and community interests. The revised penalty framework ensures that those who disregard the law face meaningful legal and financial consequences. It is about restoring the rule of law, protecting our environment, and safeguarding the rights for the future generations.

Tuan Speaker, enforcement cannot be effective without the right tools. These amendments go further by proposing new and expanded enforcement powers, including powers of arrest, eviction, seizure, and related actions under the Land Code. This significantly improves the operational effectiveness of Land and Survey Department, equipping them with the authority they need to act decisively across all areas of land management and land administration. Nonetheless, to ensure the effectiveness of enforcement measures, the Enforcement Branch of Land and Survey Department must be strengthened and restructured to effectively support the ongoing reforms.

In essence, these enhancements represent a proactive and comprehensive strategy to uphold Sarawak's land laws. They will strengthen compliance, reduce abuses, and enable better coordination between the enforcement agencies and the land administrators. Ultimately, this supports our shared vision for a well-regulated, secure, and orderly land management system, in line with Sarawak's long-term development goals.

Technological Advancements

As we move forward with the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS) 2030 and implement the Sarawak Digital Economy Blueprint, these amendments are not only relevant but essential. They reflect our government's commitment to leverage technology to improve governance, efficiency, and public service delivery values that are central to building a digitally empowered Sarawak.

One of the most impactful reforms introduced is the amendment of the procedure for the application of subdivision and development of land, particularly through the full adoption of the eSPA System. Previously, applicants were required to submit six physical copies of plans, resulting in cumbersome, time consuming, and resource-intensive processes. With this amendment, the submission process becomes fully digital, a transformation that will benefit both government agencies and private sector stakeholders alike.

This is not just about convenience, it's about creating a more responsive, reliable, and resilient system that aligns with Sarawak's vision of becoming a smart, inclusive, and technology-driven state.

As we continue to develop our urban areas and rural communities, it is imperative that our land systems support fast, secure, and user-friendly processes that meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

By embracing these technological advancements, we are future proofing our land management and land administration. This is a step forward in ensuring that development processes do not become a bottleneck, but instead a catalyst for growth.

While I fully support these much-needed reforms to the Sarawak Land Code, I must also take this opportunity to emphasize that the success of these amendments will ultimately depend on their careful and inclusive implementation. The shift towards modernisation, especially the integration of digital systems and streamlined processes is commendable. However, we must ensure that no one is left behind, particularly in rural and remote areas who may face challenges in internet connectivity, digital literacy, and access to the government services. Digital transformation must not widen the digital divide; it must bridge it. It should empower, not exclude.

I, therefore, fully support the amendment and urge all Honourable Members to do the same. Let us empower our institutions to protect what rightfully belongs to the State and the people of Sarawak. With that, Tuan Speaker, I strongly support this amendment, thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Kalaka.

YB Tuan Haji Mohamad bin Duri: Terima kasih Tuan Speaker. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam sejahtera, Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur, *Salam Segulai Sejalai*. It is my honour to speak in support of the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. This amendment is not just an administrative exercise. It is a comprehensive step that brings real and tangible benefits to the people of Sarawak.

First and foremost, this Bill makes land services more efficient and more accessible. By removing outdated procedures and digitising applications through systems like the eSPA, we are reducing wait times, cutting unnecessary costs and making land dealings more transparent. The days of submitting multiple physical copies and waiting for months are soon to be over. This is a service upgrade that every applicant, from the towns to the *kampungs*, will appreciate.

"Inilah pilihan rakyat, Proses yang cepat dan tepat dapat dijalankan oleh Kerajaan". Secondly, the amendment strengthens enforcement powers to protect public and private landowners alike. With stronger penalties for illegal extraction and land encroachment, we are sending a clear signal, Sarawak's land is not up for the exploitation. The improved enforcement framework protects landowners, communities and the state's long-term interest. When we deter illegal activities, we protect livelihoods, preserve development zones and safeguard the environment. Nevertheless, to effectively support the broader enforcement mandate introduced by these proposed amendments, I urge the Enforcement Branch under the Land and Survey Department be strengthened and restructured to ensure it is equipped with sufficient manpower and resources.

Another vital benefit lies in planning. The clearer definition of *"development plan"* and the alignment of approval timelines help remove uncertainties from the development processes. This is especially important for small landowners and local entrepreneurs who cannot afford delays or vague procedures. With streamlined guidelines, they can plan their investments better, develop their land with confidence and contribute more actively to the local economy.

Tuan Speaker, these amendments also prepare Sarawak for the future. The requirement to submit as-built utility data and the creation of 3D utility mapping system are not just about digital records. They are about laying the foundation for smart development. With the accurate underground data, we can prevent costly construction conflicts, plan better infrastructure and make our cities safer and more sustainable. *"Dan ini akan mempercepatkan juga proses pembangunan di negeri Sarawak yang luas dan makmur"*.

Tuan Speaker, this amendment also prepare Sarawak, sorry... the *rakyat* will also benefit from the government's ability to regulate charges, contributions and levy more effectively. With proper fee structures in place, public infrastructure can be better maintained and extended to where it is needed most, especially rural and under-served communities.

This amendment also does not only make systems more robust. It makes systems fairer. By including the term "*any person*" in planning regulations, we ensure that the same rules apply to everyone. To conclude, the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is an example of policy that puts the *rakyat* first. It updates the laws, supports sustainable development and modernized land management and land administration without losing sight of inclusiveness. I fully support this Bill and urge my fellow Honourable Members to do the same. Let us take this opportunity to pass reforms that bring real progress to the people of Sarawak. With that, Tuan Speaker, I beg to move. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: The Honourable Member for Tupong.

YB Dato Fazzrudin bin Haji Abdul Rahman: Terima kasih Tuan Speaker, Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Ta'ala Wabarakatuh, Salam sejahtera dan Salam Sarawak Maju Makmur.

Pertamanya, terima kasih di atas peluang untuk saya turut serta dalam perbahasan Rang Undang-Undang Kanun Tanah (Pindaan), 2025. Saya juga mengambil kesempatan ini untuk menzahirkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan kepada Yang Berhormat Timbalan Premier merangkap Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari yang telah membentangkan Rang Undang-Undang ini.

Rang Undang-Undang ini membawa satu dimensi baharu selaras dengan aspirasi untuk menambah baik rangka tadbir urus tanah oleh Jabatan Tanah dan Survei, yang lebih adil dan inklusif. *Land and Survey* sentiasa berusaha untuk mempertingkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan mereka. "*Patutlah sidaknya menang*", tiga anugerah emas di Malaysia Teknologi Ekspo pada awal tahun ini. Tahniah saya ucapkan. Antara peruntukan penting dalam pindaan ini adalah pengenalan kepada struktur undang-undang formal bagi urusan wakaf dan *endowment* yang wajar diberikan perhatian khusus.

Saya juga berterima kasih kepada... "*dah sik ada lagi dahnya*", Yang Berhormat daripada Padungan kerana mengambil masa untuk mengenal pasti ataupun mengambil maklum lagi apakah maksudnya wakaf tersebut. Yang Berhormat Padungan *tadi*, he raised among other on the issue of *wakaf* and *endowment*. If he would have read carefully, it is clear that matter related to Land Code as suggested in the amendment is strictly pertains to land. Land as we all know is under the state list in the Federal Constitution. The amendment including the *wakaf* is to facilitate the practice in Land and Survey Department, which need to be addressed. Bearing in mind that this does not apply to *wakaf* only but also to other religion having similar concept. Hence, to suggest that the amendment is to bring Islamic notion as mentioned by "*Ahli Padungan tadi*" is totally misconceived as the law applies to all irrespective of religious belief.

Seperti yang semua sedia maklum, tanah wakaf, secara definisinya adalah untuk manfaat semua, contoh seperti tempat beribadat, institusi pendidikan, pusat kebajikan dan lain-lain perkhidmatan yang bertujuan untuk membangunkan masyarakat. Masalah yang sering berlaku sebelum ini ialah kelongkongan rangka undang-undang khusus untuk wakaf dan pendaftaran tanah *endowment* yang menimbulkan kekeliruan dan kelewatan.

Jadi kita menyokong sepenuhnya dan amat mengalu-alukan niat yang murni dari para dermawan yang budiman, baik individu serta pertubuhan yang ingin mewakafkan tanah, tetapi disebabkan halangan dari aspek pentadbiran, maka niat mereka itu tidak kesampaian dan tidak dapat dilaksanakan. Jadi, melalui Pindaan ini, kita berharap agar kekangan tersebut dapat diatasi untuk memungkinkan proses tanah wakaf yang lebih teratur dan sempurna.

Tuan Speaker, Kerajaan Sarawak amat menitikberatkan aspek pembangunan masyarakat baik dari segi kerohanian, pendidikan dan kebajikan. Ini adalah selaras dengan teras Strategi Pembangunan Pasca COVID-19 (PCDS) 2030 iaitu aspek inklusiviti sosial. Saya yakin, rakan-rakan Ahli Yang Berhormat yang lain juga mempunyai pengalaman yang sama di mana tanah wakaf ini berjaya dimanfaatkan untuk menjadi institusi penggerak komuniti.

Tetapi kita juga harus menitikberatkan soal kelestarian tanah wakaf – soal sama ada masyarakat pada masa akan datang dapat terus menerima manfaat yang sama seperti hari ini dan tidak diganggu gugat.

Melalui pindaan ini yang akan menstrukturkan pendaftaran tanah wakaf dan *endowment*, kita dapat mengurangkan pertikaian, melindungi tujuan asal tanah tersebut dan membolehkan pihak berkuasa awam merancang pembangunan di sekitar dengan lebih berkesan. Ini kembali kepada memelihara niat asal oleh pemberi wakaf, sama ada tanah tersebut dikhususkan untuk pembinaan masjid, surau, gereja, kuil, sekolah atau pun klinik kesihatan, sumbangan pemilik tanah tersebut ada kuasa undang-undang yang lebih jelas.

Tuan Speaker, it is high time that we ensure *wakaf* and *endowment* lands are respected in broader development strategies. This includes the realignment of development proposal approval timeline with the latest State Planning Authority (SPA) policy, incorporating it into Sarawak's structured planning ecosystem. We want to avoid delays that has left *wakaf* and endowment lands in prolonged legal or operational limbo by improving planning efficiency for lands surrounded by ongoing developments. This is a necessary reform that protects the sanctity of public-spirited land contributions and ensures that they are given proper space and respect in our physical development plans.

Tuan Speaker, in conclusion, this amendment reflects Sarawak's values. It upholds the principle that land is not just a commodity, but a legacy. We can now ensure that wakaf and endowment lands are legacies that can be entrusted for public benefit with dignity and security. With the status of these lands being affirmed, it is my hope that it will continue to benefit the community, becoming beacons to uplift the society through its role in enabling social development in all aspects. Wakaf and endowment land in its very essence is about paying it forward. Today, with this Bill and with the support of fellow Honourable Members, we are paying it forward; to ensure the society will continue to benefit and the benefits can be felt by all layers of society.

I end my speech with a quote from former UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill: "*We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.*"

With that, I beg to support this Bill. Thank you. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Tuan Speaker: The Honourable Member for Katibas.

YB Encik Lidam anak Assan: Tuan Speaker, first and foremost, I would like to thank you for allowing me to debate in this important Bill for our beloved Sarawak. I wish to congratulate Yang Berhormat Deputy Premier, the Second Minister for Natural Resources and Urban Development; and a Member for N.82 Bukit Sari for successful tabling of this important Bill.

Good land management is critically important for Sarawak as we embark on economic development, environmental sustainability, social inclusivity, and governance as enshrined in our PCDS2030. As we must recognise the significance of this Bill in that it provides total legal frameworks and provision for the conservation of our natural resources particularly our rock materials will enable us to control the pollution and management and other matter incidental thereto which will support our PCDS2030 on Environmental Sustainability and Inclusive Society.

Sarawak has many lessons learnt among others are our oil and gas. This land resource amendment bill is to ensure no room for distortion or encroachment into our right by outsiders. As we remember it well, among others the attempt to nationalise or centralise our land law and management including the resources deposited beneath our soils.

It is therefore important to understand the importance of this Bill and its meaning as it will help to manage, safeguard and protect our resources such as our rock materials for our future generations. We will cover all aspects of regulations and licensing, extraction, transportation, revenue collection, penalty on illegal possession and conservation efforts.

The Bill will provide a sustainable management of natural resources through modernisation and alignment with current needs for greater economic benefits for *Sarawak Maju Makmur*.

Tuan Speaker, donating land as a gift is an act of piety and faith which is seen as an act of virtuous in the eyes of many religions and faith. This is so common in our culture as *wakaf* in Muslim faith or endowment in Christianity which carries merit in our spiritual life. In modern life the concept of *wakaf* or endowment can be much subject to economic pressure as such it requires effective regulatory body with better law and regulation to govern it.

Inserting the new Section 171A which allow an application to declare such land belong to any person or body as *wakaf* or endowment land is timely in accordance with the rules made under Section 213, subject to the conditions or requirements as in new clause in Clause 213 among others clause 213(n) to include regulating procedures for *wakaf* or land endowment and any matters related thereto. Clause 213(o) the imposition of royalty, levy, fees or any other charges related to it.

This Amendment Bill also includes the necessity to incorporate the Divisional Development Plan by SPA under Section 227(16c) to allow approval before any use. It also contains express written statement containing policy and direction of the State Planning Authority in respect of physical, social and economic development including planning and management of its resource.

Once its powers enacted these legal frameworks will ensure prudent implementation and management of our *wakaf* and endowment land which will lead to better and effective management, create jobs, and promote better land management while at the same time we also prevent dispute between the donor and recipient that could harm the good faith of the recipient.

Tuan Speaker, in view of the forth going merit of the Bill, Katibas beg to support the Bills. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Lingga.

YB Puan Dayang Noorazah bte Awang Sohor: Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. First, I would like to express gratitude to Tuan Speaker for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Debate on the Second Reading of the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which was presented by the Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister for Natural Resources and Urban Development; and Member of the N.82 Bukit Sari State Legislative Assembly.

Tuan Speaker, today, I stand before you to strongly advocate for the passage of the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. This Bill represents a crucial step forward in how we manage our precious land resources, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for all Sarawakians.

This Bill proposes critical updates to our existing Land Code. It covers everything from responsible rock material management to empowering the State Planning Authority for better development and supporting religious endowments. The Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is a necessary and forward-looking piece of legislation that will modernize land management in Sarawak, promote sustainable resource utilization, and enhance the overall efficiency and transparency of land administration.

Tuan Speaker, why this Bill matters to Sarawak? Sarawak's economy relies heavily on our natural resources. We have all seen the impact quarrying activities can have on our environment, on our communities. This Bill introduces stricter licencing for rock material extraction and transportation. This means greater accountability, stronger penalties for those who break the rules, and a system that prioritizes environmental protection.

People may argue that these stricter regulations could stifle the construction and quarrying industries, leading to increased costs and project delays. However, I believe this concern can be addressed by the responsible government agency by implementing a clear, transparent, and efficient licensing process that minimize bureaucratic hurdles while ensuring compliance with environmental standards. This isn't just about protecting the environment. Licensing the export of rock material ensure that Sarawak benefits financially from its own resources, generating revenue that can be invested back into our State.

For too long, our Land Code has been difficult to enforce fully. This Amendment tackles this issue head-on. By widening the scope of enforcement and increasing penalties, we send clear message, illegal land activities will not be tolerated. This will ensure responsible land use, protecting state land for the benefit of all Sarawakians, not just a select few. It also creates a level playing field for those who follow the law.

Tuan Speaker, Sarawak is developing rapidly but growth without a plan can lead to chaos. This Bill empowers the State Planning Authority with clearer definitions and greater authority to guide land use.

Referring to Amendment to Section 227, the introduction of new definitions for "*Development Plan*". "*Divisional Structure Plan*", "*Local Plan*" "*Special Area Plan*" and "*State Physical Plan*" is essential for creating a coherent and integrated planning framework. These definitions will provide clarity and consistency in land-use planning, ensuring that development projects are aligned with the state's overall strategic objectives.

Furthermore, empowering the State Planning Authority and streamlining plan approval processes will lead to more efficient and effective land development. This will attract investment, create jobs and improve the quality of life for Sarawakians.

This is how we ensure that our development is sustainable, preserving our environment, managing urbanization and efficiently planning infrastructure for the benefit of all communities both urban and rural.

Tuan Speaker, the inclusion of provision for *wakaf* and other endowments in New Section 171A demonstrates the government's commitment to protecting cultural heritage and religious values while enabling social welfare and community development. By providing a legal framework for these traditional forms of landownership and management, the Bill will ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

As mentioned by Ahli Yang Berhormat for Padungan just now, Section 171A may create conflicts with existing land laws and complicate land administration, creating legal uncertainties and disputes.

However, I believe the government can prevent conflicts by enacting carefully drafted implementing regulations. The amendments to Section 213 (a) (iii) & (n) gives the power to regulate "*the procedure for wakaf and endowment and any matters related thereof*". These amendments will establish clear guidelines, disputes resolution mechanisms and ensure consistency with existing laws.

We all know that navigating the land administration system can be slow and complicated. This Bill introduces measures to streamline processes, reduce bureaucratic hurdles and make it easier for businesses and individuals to navigate the system.

This will boost investor confidence, encourage economic growth and ultimately make life easier for everyone in Sarawak.

We know that some may have concerns about increased regulations or potential impacts on small businesses. Let us all be clear. This bill is not designed to stifle economic activity. The government and land survey are committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition and a fair system for everyone.

Tuan Speaker, to conclude, the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is a bold step towards a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for Sarawak. It addresses critical challenges, seizes opportunities for growth and reflects our commitment to responsible land management.

I urge all members of this Dewan to support this Bill and join in building a brighter future for all Sarawakians. Therefore, I hereby fully support the Land Code Amendment Bill, 2025.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli Yang Berhormat for Seremba

YB Encik Miro anak Simuh: Thank you, Tuan Speaker for giving me the opportunity to debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 presented by YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan, Deputy Premier, Second Minister for Natural Resources and Urban Development; and Member for N.82 Bukit Sari.

I rise to speak on a matter that threatens the very foundation of ownership, justice and economic stability in our society – *the land fraud*.

Land is not just property. It is livelihood, it is heritage, it is security for individuals, families, and future generations. Yet across the globe, land fraud has become a rampant and deeply corrosive issue. Fraudsters forge documents, impersonate rightful owners and manipulate weak systems to seize what does not belong to them.

For that matter, allow me to refer to the Amendment to Section 128 that requires the Registrar to display notice of his intention to issue a new issue document of title for loss of title in the office of the Superintendent and the District Office, where the land is located.

Amendment to Section 128 caught my attention as I refer to a few cases that involved the land dispute due to the lost of Land Title that reported by 3rd party and not by the landowner themselves. Worst case, all documents related to the '*said*' lost title are fake documents, that comprise of the Police Report, the SD from the appointed Advocates and all others related documents needed by the department. The issue arises on how the department approved with new Land Title with new name without the knowing of the original landowner.

I brought the attention to these cases as it happened to my own sister, where her land with the genuine title from the Land and Survey Sarawak, with the title of Mixed Zone Perpetuity, located at Lot 560 Block 11 Matang Land District was transferred to other owner without her permission and knowledge in 2011 and only been noticed by her this year. This is an unlawfully act that deprived of ownership or the rightful property through deceptive or illegal means.

The modus operandi is simple, they fake the police report by reporting the lost of the land title and the fraudsters prepare all the related fake documents to be presented to Land and Survey office for further action taken. The fraudsters forge her signature and look totally different from hers on the documents to transfer the ownership without the genuine owner's knowledge. The fraudsters as the 3rd party pretend to be the rightful owner and claim for the new title. The question is, why the

Department of Land and Survey Kuching Division act without verifying the genuinely of all the related documents by just issuing the new title. I do believe that this is the insider job done by somebody that works closely with the culprits or syndicates that doing this not once, but many times before.

My sister has made the police report for her lost and lets the police to do the in-depth investigation to bring the culprits to justice. And I do believe that the elements of CBT, bribes or corrupt practices might happen in this case.

As I do my own findings, why is this happen in the most important department that look into the most valuable assets, not only own by the people, but the government too, I found out that there are a few elements that allow it:

- (a) Weak land registry systems that can be manipulate by anyone who got access to it.
- (b) Issues of integrity, implies trustworthiness and honesty of the officers who violated their responsibilities. This can be done by, Improved Staff Training and Integrity by provides regular fraud detection and prevention training for land registry unit. Enforce strict ethical standards, including background checks and whistleblower protection.
- (c) Lack of proper identity verification on who have the authority to use the systems. Need a stronger Identity Verification and authorization by the department.
- (d) Poor document handling or storage that can be access by anybody.

I am not pointing fingers to anybody or mentioning anyone, but without the work of insiders, this thing will never happen. I hope with the amendments that will be made to the bill to enhance the clear authority and strict justification for any request of issuing the new Land Title and any matters related to land transferring, the fraud issues of land matters can be eliminate. With the introduction of stringent legal framework and the well protection to the genuine landowner, we hope that the amendment will suit well to it needs. Land fraud is not just a legal issue, it is a social injustice, and it is our duty to speak out, act and reform the system that allow it to persist.

With that Tuan Speaker, I begged to support the Land Code Amendment Bill, 2025 by the minister in charge. Thank you very much.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Bukit Assek.

YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek: Tuan Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

I would like to express my support for the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025, it is a Bill that represents an important step forward in modernizing land governance in Sarawak. I would like to highlight the following important points to the august House.

The Amendment Bill allowed for the Stronger Control Over Natural Resources

The enhanced provisions under Section 32A and the new Section 32AA significantly strengthen our ability to regulate the extraction, possession and especially the cross-border transportation of rock material. This is timely and necessary. Sarawak must not become a passive exporter of raw resources with light oversight. These new rules will prevent illegal extraction, protect our environment and ensure fair revenue collection for the state.

Modernization of Planning and Development Procedures

The amendments to Sections 227-234, including the introduction of utility surveys, clearer definitions of planning documents and extended approval period, reflect a sincere attempt to

streamline and digitize land development processes. This will reduce bureaucracy, improve investor confidence and align our planning framework with the demands of a fast-evolving economy.

Formal Recognition of Wakaf (Religious Endowment)

The addition of Section 171A, which introduces the recognition of wakaf or land endowment for religious and charitable purposes, is a meaningful reform. For the first time, the Land Code will provide a clear legal standing for lands set aside not only by Majlis Islam Sarawak, but also by individual landowners who wish to dedicate land for religious or charitable causes.

Importantly, this provision does not limit itself to Islam *wakaf* alone. It extends protection to similar forms of endowment by other religious communities provided they are regulated by their own governing laws. This reflects Sarawak's inclusive and pluralistic values, where different faiths are treated with respect and their contributions to society are recognized equally under the law. Let me give you a few examples:

A piece of land donated by a Christian family for the construction of a chapel or a community home for the elderly would now have formal protection under law, preventing it from being misused or claimed for other purposes.

A Chinese temple association that wishes to designate part of its land as a charitable trust for the education of underprivileged children can now do so with greater legal certainty.

By formally recognizing *wakaf*, this amendment ensures that lands intended for spiritual, cultural or charitable use are protected, even across generations. It strengthens the foundation for interfaith harmony, community service, and long-term planning for religious organizations and NGOs in Sarawak. This provision is not just administrative, it is a symbol of fairness and a practical mechanism to support the moral fabric of our society.

Tuan Speaker, however, while I support the Bill, I also wish to raise one important cautionary point for our collective consideration.

With increased penalties and broader enforcement powers, including presumptions of guilt and heavy fines, we must ensure that small landholders and rural communities are not unjustly penalized.

Enforcement mechanisms must be fair, transparent, and accompanied by proper awareness and education. We should not allow overzealous enforcement to result in unintended consequences, particularly, for those who may unknowingly be in breach of new regulations.

Tuan Speaker, in conclusion, this Bill strengthens our control over resources, modernizes land governance, and honours our multicultural fabric. But as we move forward, let us balance enforcement with equity, ensuring that development is both lawful and just. And with that, I support the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Meluan.

YB Encik Rolland Duat anak Jubin: Tuan Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to debate on this Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Honourable Members of the Legislative, I would like to touch on the new Section 32AA. I firmly support the proposed Land Code Bill, which introduces stringent penalties for violations concerning land use, encroachment, and illegal development. Our state's land resources are vital to our collective future; they sustain agriculture, preserve environmental balance, and protect the heritage and livelihoods of countless communities.

For too long, weak enforcement and lenient penalties have allowed land grabbers and violators to act with impunity, leading to environmental degradation, displacement of vulnerable populations, and widespread corruption. This Bill marks a crucial turning point by ensuring that violators face

consequences commensurate with the damage they inflict not just on the land, but on society as a whole.

Heavy punishment under this law sends a clear message that land crimes are serious crimes. By enforcing accountability, we protect our land for future generations, uphold the rules of the law and create a fairer and more sustainable land management system.

Issuing licenses for transporting rock material out of the state is vital for resource management, revenue assurance, legal compliance, and environmental protection. Making unlicensed transport a punishable offense strengthens regulatory mechanisms, upholds the rule of law, and protects public interest. A fine not less than 100 thousand Ringgit and or imprisonment for not exceeding five years showing how serious we are in taking care of our source such as rock material.

Tuan Speaker, I would like to touch on amendment to Section 227. Introducing a development plan and divisional structure plan is crucial for effectively managing land, particularly native or customary land, which often has deep cultural significance and complex tenure arrangements. Here's why these planning tools are important, Tuan Speaker.

(a) Clarity and Strategic Vision

Provides a long-term vision for how land should be used (for examples for residential, agricultural, commercial and conservation), ensuring development aligns with broader economic, social, and environmental goals.

(b) Protection of Native Land Rights

These plans help integrate traditional land tenure systems into formal planning frameworks, ensuring that customary ownership is respected while enabling sustainable development. Planning tools help avoid the unregulated conversion of native land into private or state-held land without the free, prior, and informed consent of landowners.

(c) Conflict Minimization

Native land often has multiple stakeholders with overlapping or unclear rights. Structured planning provides a transparent process for land allocation, reducing disputes. It also helps delineate zones for different uses, preventing conflicting land uses such as industrial projects in sacred or residential areas.

(d) Infrastructure and Service Delivery

Coordinated planning ensures that roads, utilities, schools, and hospitals are efficiently distributed and accessible, even in rural or tribal areas. Proper zoning through structure plans helps direct public and private investments into areas that support community priorities.

(e) Environmental and Cultural Preservation

Development and structure plans can designate protected areas, helping to conserve ecosystems, heritage sites, and culturally important landscapes on native land. This balances economic development with the preservation of traditional knowledge and land practices.

(f) Enabling Economic Empowerment

With clear plans in place, native communities can better participate in the economy, for instance through joint ventures, land leases, or eco-tourism, all while retaining ownership and control over their land. Development plans can also identify training and employment opportunities tied to local land-based industries.

(g) Legal and Policy Integration

Development and structure plans help align customary land management with national policies, like frameworks, and international commitments (e.g. climate resilience, indigenous rights).

Introducing a Development Plan and Divisional Structure Plan is essential for bridging the gap between traditional land management and modern development needs, ensuring that native lands are utilized sustainably, respectfully and effectively.

Tuan Speaker, in conclusion, the passage and the implementation of a comprehensive Land Code Bill is of long-term strategic importance to Sarawak. Such legislation creates a structured and legally sound framework for land administration, ownership, and usage, which promotes transparency, reduces conflicts, and enhances investor confidence. Over time, this fosters sustainable economic growth, enables better urban and rural planning, secures property rights, and ensures equitable access to land resources. Ultimately, a robust land code strengthens governance and serves as a foundational pillar for social stability and national development. I urge all lawmakers and stakeholders to support this Bill and work together to ensure its effective implementation.

I hereby strongly support the Bill. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Pelagus.

YB Encik Wilson Nyabong anak Ijang: Thank you Tuan Speaker. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate in this debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 which has been introduced by our Honourable Deputy Premier, YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan, Second Minister of Natural Resources and Urban Development; and also the Assemblyman for N.82 Bukit Sari.

Tuan Speaker, today, I rise to day to offer my considered views on this comprehensive amendment to our land code which has been thoughtfully structured into four pillars of reform. Each component of this Bill serves to establish a more efficient, transparent, and equitable framework for land management and administration, one that is responsive to the evolving needs of our society, and the complex demands of this modern era.

Changes in Functions, Procedures and Work Processes

Tuan Speaker, at the core of this amendment is a bold and comprehensive digital transformation, spearheaded by the introduction of the eSPA system. This is not merely an incremental enhancement, but it represents a significant leap forward. The transition from the traditional, paper-based processes to a fully digital submission platform will fundamentally improve the way the public interacts to our land administration. It promises greater efficiency, reduced bureaucracy delays and most importantly, improved accessibility of government services to the *rakyat*.

Furthermore, recognizing the critical nature of time sensitive land transactions, often pivotal to investment decisions, this amendment expands the scope of responsibilities to include additional qualified officers. By doing so, we are strengthening the system's responsiveness and efficiency. These reforms are expected to accelerate and expedite the approvals, alleviate administrative bottlenecks and ultimately create a more conducive environment for sustainable economic development throughout our State Sarawak.

Definition and Policy Updates

Tuan Speaker, one of the notable strengths of this Bill lies in its emphasis on clarity and policy coherence. The refined and enhanced definitions of key terms, most notably the expanded

interpretation of “*development plan*”, serve to strengthen the mandate of the State Planning Unit (SPU) (SPA), providing it is a clearer legal authority to regulate and oversee land development in a more structured and sustainable manner.

Additionally, Tuan Speaker the Bill empowers the SPA to impose levies, fees, contributions and other charges. This provision introduces a more dynamic and adaptable financial mechanism, enabling the Authority to better support critical functions such as urban planning, infrastructure development and regulatory enforcement.

The introduction of new licensing requirements for the cross-border transportation of rock materials marks a critical step in closing the long-standing regulatory gap. For too long, the movement of these valuable resources has occurred with minimal oversight. This amendment brings much-needed alignment between enforcement and the true economic significance of Sarawak’s natural assets. The imposition of enhanced penalties-up to RM1 million-sends a clear and firm message: Sarawak is serious about protecting and responsibly managing its natural wealth.

Equally significant are the newly introduced legal provisions governing *wakaf*, or religious endowments. By formally recognizing *wakaf* arrangements within the framework of the Land Code, this Bill affirms our commitment in honouring Sarawak’s rich cultural and religious diversity. It ensures that such endowments are not only respected but also administered with a legal clarity and certainty, upholding tradition while embracing the rule of law.

Enhancing Enforcement and Compliance

Tuan Speaker, effective governance is underpinned by robust enforcement and this Bill significantly strengthens our capacity in this domain. The revised and substantially increased penalties for unlawful land occupation, encroachment and unauthorized resource extraction underscore Sarawak’s renewed commitment to upholding the integrity of our land laws. These offenses are no longer treated lightly; they are recognized for the serious threats they pose to Sarawak’s legal order and resource sustainability.

Moreover, by extending enforcement powers to cover the full spectrum of land-related offences under the Land Code, this amendment equips the Land and Survey Department with the necessary authority to safeguard Sarawak’s land interests more effectively. The inclusion of provisions for asset seizure and enhanced eviction powers represents a decisive move to address long-standing encroachment issues in several parts of the state.

Importantly, these expanded powers must be supported by a corresponding restructuring and strengthening of our enforcement apparatus. The amendments rightly acknowledge the need for increased manpower and improved operational capacity to ensure that these legal tools can be implemented effectively on the ground.

Technological Advancements

Tuan Speaker, these amendments are not introduced in a vacuum. They are a direct reflection of the Sarawak Government’s steadfast commitment to digital transformation. This Bill exemplifies our resolve to adopt technology not merely as a symbol of progress but as a strategic tool to drive meaningful reform. The ideals of good governance, operational efficiency and improved public services delivery are no longer aspirational, they are being realized through bold, legislative action such as this. As we work towards building a digitally empowered Sarawak, this Bill serves as a timely and essential instrument for achieving that vision.

Among the most transformative elements of this Bill is the complete restructuring of the procedures for land subdivision and development applications, now made possible through the full implementation and adoption of the eSPA system. This digital shift eliminates unnecessary redundancies, simplifies workflows and significantly improves inter-agency coordination. Whether it

is the small landowner in a rural area, an urban planner managing town development or a developer pursuing timely project approvals, this reform delivers good measurement benefits to the stakeholders.

By embracing these digital reforms, we are not merely adapting to current technological trends, we are further proofing our governance infrastructure. Through the digitalization of land administration processes, we are removing delays, enhancing transparency and instilling greater confidence within the private sector. In doing so, we are transforming what was once a bureaucratic burden into a catalyst for economic opportunity.

The amendment before us today signals our Sarawak Government's enduring commitment to progress, fairness and sustainability. This Bill modernizes our administrative systems, protects our natural resources, strengthening our enforcement mechanism and harness the power of technology to deliver better outcomes. It is a forward-looking legislative initiative that promises lasting benefits, not only for our generation but for those to come. Let us, therefore, move forward in unity and purpose and pass this amendment Bill to usher in a more efficient, inclusive and just land governance framework for Sarawak.

With that, Tuan Speaker, I fully support this Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you, Sir.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Kota Sentosa.

YB Encik Yap Yau Sin: Thank you, Tuan Speaker, for the opportunity to participate in the debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

The proposed amendments are both timely and necessary to address legal ambiguities and close existing gaps in the Sarawak Land Code. The introduction of Sections 32AA and 171A reflects Sarawak's evolving needs and ensure that our land legislations remain just, relevant and functional.

Tuan Speaker, Section 32AA introduces a crucial safeguard by prohibiting the transportation of rock materials outside Sarawak without a valid licence. Our rock materials, gravel, sand and limestone and other minerals are vital natural resources that play a key role in our economy, environment and cultural identity. Without proper regulations unlicensed extractions and transportation could lead to serious environmental degradation including soil erosion, river siltation and habitat destruction. This provision is fully in line with Sarawak constitutional rights to manage and protect its natural resources. A robust licensing system not only ensures compliance with environmental, labour and safety regulations, but also secures rightful revenue for the state through royalties, taxes and fees. Licensing enhances transparency, allow for effective monitoring and deters illegal mining activities.

I disagree with the observation of the Member for Padungan asking for leniency on behalf of offender transporters. The principles of natural justice are fundamental legal rules that ensures fairness in decision making processes especially when someone's rights or interests are affected. For a person transporting rock materials, example sand, gravels, stones these principles apply in cases involving regulatory enforcement, licensing, penalties or disputes. The key principles include right to a fair hearing, opportunity to respond, reasoned decisions, if penalised the person must receive a written justification for the decision, citing legal grounds and facts, and he has that right to appeal, to challenge an adverse decision before a higher authority or court. The absence of such control risk irreversible damage to Sarawak's ecosystem, the depletion of resources and loss of State revenue. Section 32AA therefore is a proactive and necessary measure that reinforces Sarawak's legal sovereignty and environmental stewardship.

Tuan Speaker, turning to Section 171A. This new provision addresses the legal status and protection of endowment land or *wakaf* which have long supported religious and charitable institutions such as mosques, churches, temples and mission schools. These lands are not only

spiritual assets but also economic ones often providing income to fund religious, educational, health and community services.

However, in the absence of a specific legal framework, endowment land becomes vulnerable to encroachment, mismanagement or unlawful acquisition. Section 171A will provide legal clarity, safeguard ownership rights, establish dispute resolution mechanisms and impose penalties for violations. This will reduce conflicts and ensure that these lands are used for their intended purposes.

A dedicated legal provision also enhances transparency and builds trusts among donors when contributors are assured that their endowments will be lawfully managed and respected. They are more likely to support religious and charitable institutions. Furthermore, a strong legal framework can facilitate the development of these lands through agriculture, rental or commercial activities in a way that sustain and strengthen community services.

Tuan Speaker, the introduction of Section 171A is both forward looking and essential. It provides the necessary legal protections for endowment lands, ensuring transparency, preventing abuse and enhancing the contribution of religious bodies for Sarawak's social fabric.

Tuan Speaker, in conclusion, I strongly support the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. The proposed Sections 32AA and 171A represent thoughtful and strategic legislative improvements that will benefit Sarawak economically, environmentally and socially. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Tamin.

YB Ir. Christopher Gira @ Gira anak Sambang: Thank You Tuan Speaker for giving me opportunity to participate debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. First foremost, I would like to congratulate Yang Berhormat Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Haji Ali Hassan, Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; *dan* Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari for tabling the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in this august House.

Tuan Speaker, this Bill signifies a critical step forward in Sarawak's approach to land administration, development planning and environmental stewardship.

This amendment is driven by the necessity for a more robust legal framework that aligns with Sarawak's involving need. It strengthens enforcement measures, addresses gaps in infrastructure planning, and ensures that the land development progresses in a manner that is sustainable, equitable and beneficial to our people.

Tuan Speaker, one of the key provisions of this amendment is the regulation of rock material transportation, an area that until now has lacked comprehensive oversight. With a stronger legal mechanism, we can safeguard our natural resources against unauthorized extraction while ensuring that our industries operate transparently and responsibly.

Furthermore, this Bill imposes stricter penalties on unlawful occupation of State land. Such illegal activities undermine the integrity of our land management system and if left unchecked could hinder economic progress and environmental conservation efforts. With this amendment, we reinforce the state's commitment to upholding the rule of law while ensuring that the fair and legal access to land for all Sarawakians.

Additionally, the Bill refines the definition of development plans, providing a greater clarity and structure to approval processes. This will facilitate better coordination among stakeholders, reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, and accelerate sustainable development projects across the state.

Tuan Speaker, we also recognize that infrastructure and utilities play a vital role in Sarawak's growth. Through this amendment, we establish new guidelines that ensure such developments are properly planned, executed, and maintained for long-term benefit. The implementation of these

improved regulations will provide a solid foundation for the future expansion while securing the well-being of our communities.

It is acknowledged that this legislative change will require additional financial expenditure. However, these investments are necessary to enhance enforcement capabilities, upgrade land administration systems, and support Sarawak's overall development agenda. I am confident the benefits far outweigh the costs, as this amendment lays the groundwork for more organized, efficient and accountable land management frameworks.

Tuan Speaker, after listening to the argument from the Honourable Member for Padungan, which Honourable Member wanted the *wakaf* land to be excluded from this Land Code Bill, 2025.

Therefore, I did, searched and found some points about *wakaf* land and endowment land as follows:

Firstly, *wakaf* land or religious endowment has long played a critical role in uplifting communities, providing education, shelter and welfare. Yet until now, in Sarawak, there has been no formal recognition of such land in our legal framework. This amendment introduces Section 171A, a historic provision that finally gives *wakaf* land the legal status it deserves.

Secondly, by including *wakaf* land in our Land Code, we enhance the transparency and governance. Too many times, *wakaf* lands have been underutilized or mismanaged, not due to lack of will, but due to lack of a clear administration process. This amendment addresses that. It sets up clear pathways for declaration, management and oversight. It empowers the authorities while safeguarding the rights of the community.

Thirdly, this move is not just about Muslims. It's about inclusivity. The amendment allows for the religious endowments from all faiths to be managed in a similar way. That is the Sarawak way, multi-religious, respectful and fair to all. We are not creating a law for one group; we are building a system for everyone.

This amendment aligns our State laws with national reforms and best practices, ensuring that our people benefit from uniformity and good governance.

Finally, let us not forget the potential of *wakaf* land. Properly managed, *wakaf* assets can fund schools, clinics, homes for the elderly and social programs that reach the grassroots. This Bill is not just about land; it is about unlocking value for society.

This amendment is timely, inclusive and transformative. Let us give *wakaf* land the dignity of legal recognition, the structure of effective governance and the opportunity to serve the people of Sarawak.

Tuan Speaker, therefore, I do not concur with the idea of Honourable Member for Padungan to exclude *wakaf* land and endowment land from this Bill. Therefore, Tuan Speaker, I fully support Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Batu Kitang.

YB Dato Ir. Lo Khere Chiang: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Thank you for this opportunity to debate on the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. I rise to express my strong support for the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Because this comprehensive Bill represents a forward-thinking effort to streamline land administration, enhance enforcement, integrate digital innovations, and modernise Sarawak's land governance system. This Bill proposes amendments to many sections of the existing Land Code and introduces a few new sections and these reforms can be grouped under four main thrusts.

The first one focuses on improving functions, procedures, and administrative practices in land management. This includes formalising current practices, clarifying policy directions, and ensuring a smoother workflow within land administration offices in Sarawak. It is a step toward greater efficiency, accountability, and policy consistency.

Tuan Speaker, this amendment introduces major digital reforms, and one example is the adoption of the ESPA system (Electronic Submission and Processing Application), which allows for online submission of applications, and this eliminates the need for physical submissions, reduces face-to-face dealings, and significantly streamlines processing time. This is a leap forward in embracing e-government, promoting convenience, transparency, and speed in public service delivery.

This Bill also reinforces enforcement. New provisions make it an offence to transport raw materials out of Sarawak without written approval from the Director of Lands and Surveys. This provides much-needed legal clarity and control over Sarawak's natural resources. Additionally, penalties for illegal land clearing and encroachment have been raised with fines up to RM500,000 and imprisonment up to five years. These deterrents reflect the seriousness of land offences and the government's firm commitment to protecting state land and forest resources.

One of the newly introduced sections, Section 171A, provides a clear legal process for land to be declared as *wakaf* (religious endowment) or religious allowance land, particularly for use by the Majlis Islam. This provision also extends to non-Muslim religious communities, offering a formal legal avenue to register and to protect land for religious purposes.

Tuan Speaker, this improved legal framework is timely. I wish to highlight an application by a religious organisation, ISKCON, located in Arang road, under my constituency, N.13, Batu Kitang. ISKCON has been trying to amalgamate three pieces of land for religious purposes where only one is presently for religious purposes. The landowner of the other two pieces wishes to *wakaf* the other two to ISKCON, and it has been a year now and the land office has not been able to reply positively. I hope that with this improved legal framework, the land office will now be able to reply ISKCON and allow the three (3) pieces of land to be amalgamated and be listed for religious purposes. The Bill now provides clear provisions for utility coordination and submission requirements during land development projects as well.

Tuan Speaker, this Bill also expressly empowers the State Planning Authority (SPA) to impose levies in development exercises. Previously, such powers were implied but not clearly written in law. As someone who has long been involved in local government and infrastructure planning, I believe these amendments will help to reduce bureaucracy, protect our state's interests, and provide the legal foundation needed for future land development and religious land safeguarding.

I command the Honourable Minister for N.82 Bukit Sari and his team for tabling this Bill. With that, I give my full support to the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Kabong.

YB Dato Mohd Chee bin Kadir: Thank you, Tuan Speaker. Tuan Speaker, much has been said in support of the amendments. As I am the last speaker, I suppose, I wish to respond to the Member for Padungan on his bias remarks on not agreeing to incorporate the *wakaf* or endowment concept into the Land Code.

As a person with legal background, Member for Padungan should read the proposed amendments line by line thoroughly and understand what it means. *Wakaf* is meant for Majlis Islam Sarawak (MIS) as explicitly contained in Section 171A (2) whereas application from persons professing other religions is governed by Subsection 1 and 3 whereby the amendments clearly state, "*any other endowment made under any other religions having the same concept of wakaf which is*

to be regulated by the relevant law and body identified under such religion". Very clear there, there is a distinction between *wakaf* under Majlis Islam Sarawak and the endowment under other religions.

Tuan Speaker, I do not see why we should follow the Indian *Wakaf* Law when the proposed of new Section 171A is adequate and able to serve its intended purpose well, as it caters for all communities with diverse religious background in Sarawak. Therefore, I strongly suggest that the new Section 171A should stay as it is. With that, I support the amendment. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Bawang Assan.

YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh: Tuan Speaker, since my fellow Ahli Yang Berhormat have covered nearly all sections and all items in the proposed Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025, I would just like to highlight one item which is Clause 4, which provides for the power to issue licenses by Land and Survey for Director of transportation of rock material for export outside Sarawak. In doing so, I think we ought to ensure that the resource extraction can contribute meaningfully to the state's economy while maintaining environmental sustainability and long-term sovereignty over Sarawak's natural wealth.

Tuan Speaker, we know that rock materials such as granite, limestone, silica sand, kaolin clay and rare earth elements (REEs) can be extracted and they are of great commercial value, both domestically and globally. In order to balance economic benefits with environmental and social responsibilities, I think we will require, as stipulated in the proposed Bill, all exports of rock materials must be properly licensed, and they must comply with Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for extract operations. At the same time, the operators ought to enforce, I think, the rehabilitation and pollution control measures.

The authorities ought to make sure that a special resource fund to be collected from export duties and royalties on this rock exports be set up to support infrastructure and environmental conservation. However, Tuan Speaker, before issuing every license, we ought to also consider whether or not certain rock materials can be processed locally as downstream processing industries. This is of course to help domestic economic development and also to provide employment opportunities for our local people.

To ensure the responsible and beneficial export of rock material, we must make sure that limits are set on how much can be extracted each year to protect our resources. As we know, rock material is depletable items, once gone forever gone. And therefore, I think we ought to set limits on how much can be extracted and how much is to be exported.

And also, we ought to enforce, and I think this is all stipulated in the Amendment Bill, strict monitoring to track the movement of rock materials and we must act against any illegal mining and any illegal exports.

Tuan Speaker, the Sarawak Land Code (Amendment), Bill with its provision on issuing licenses for export of Sarawak's natural resources represents a significant move to assert our state's control over its land and its resources, aligning with our constitutional autonomy under the MA63. The amendment reflects Sarawak ongoing efforts to safeguard its sovereignty over natural resources while addressing economic, environmental, and social equity concerns. We are here also to assert constitutional rights to manage land and resources under Article 95B (3) of the Federal Constitution.

Tuan Speaker, the export of rock materials can benefit Sarawak immensely if done responsibly. We must ensure that every tonne of rock extracted can be translated into a long-term value for the people of Sarawak today and also for the people of Sarawak in the future. With this very brief remark, Tuan Speaker, I wish to fully support the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Any other Honourable Member who wishes to speak? Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, we will have a short break. Sitting resumes at 5.40 p.m.

(Mesyuarat ditangguhkan pada pukul 5.17 petang)

(Mesyuarat dimulakan pada pukul 5.49 petang)

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, Under Standing Order 9(1), I determine that this sitting goes beyond 6.30 p.m. I now call upon the Honourable Minister to do the winding-up.

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Haji Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan): Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker. Terlebih dahulu saya ingin mengucapkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan dan terima kasih kepada Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat yang telah mengambil bahagian dalam perbahasan Rang Undang-Undang yang kita utarakan tadi. Seramai 16 orang Ahli Yang Berhormat telah pun mengambil bahagian dalam perbahasan ini. Terima kasih kepada semua Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat yang terlibat. Banyak pendapat dan pandangan yang begitu bernas telah dikemukakan dan kita memberi jaminan bahawa segala pandangan dan komen yang membina akan kita pertimbangkan dalam usaha kita untuk melaksanakan pindaan kepada Rang Undang-Undang ini.

Berhubung dengan isu yang telah dikemukakan oleh Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Padungan; adalah penting untuk mereka yang terlibat dalam aktiviti pengangkutan untuk dilesenkan dan menjadi tanggungjawab mereka yang terlibat di dalam aktiviti tersebut memastikan sumber bahan batuan adalah dari sumber yang sah.

Berhubung dengan isu wakaf pula, Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Padungan; saya rasa mempunyai *misconception* berhubung dengan isu ini. Dalam Rang Undang-Undang ini jelas bahawa ia cuma menyentuh tentang pendaftaran dan pentadbiran tanah. A matter that clearly falls under the State List as provided in the Federal Constitution. Ini begitu penting untuk memastikan pengurusan wakaf ataupun *endowment* tanah tersebut diurus dengan efisien dan teratur mengikut perundangan yang akan diurus oleh Majlis Islam Sarawak dan UNIFOR *with regards to other religions*. Dan ini juga penting untuk mengelak tuntutan daripada waris pewakaf sekiranya pewakaf itu meninggal dunia. Kita tidak akan membiarkan perkara ini berlaku supaya ianya jelas. Tanah yang diwakaf itu di *register* dengan Land & Survey mengikut dengan apa yang dihasratkan oleh pewakaf ataupun mana-mana pihak yang cuba untuk menyerahkan tanah mereka untuk kegunaan agama, pendidikan, *welfare* dan sebagainya.

Sehubungan ini, saya mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat yang memahami dan menjelaskan hasrat dan tujuan Seksyen 171A ini digubal. Ini adalah daripada Kabong, daripada Kota Sentosa, Bukit Assek, Batu Kitang dan daripada Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat yang lain. Mereka membincangkan perkara ini dan memberi sokongan supaya tidak ada *complication* dan tanah ini dapat diurus dengan baik. On land valuation, the Department is currently in the process of reviewing the contribution charges, and the concerns raised by the Honourable Member for Padungan have been duly taken into consideration as part of this review.

On the issue raised by the Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Seremban, I believe the case is relating to Lot 560, Block 11, Matang Land District. This case occurred under the previous Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for loss of title applications, which allowed landowners to appoint lawyers to submit applications on their behalf. The case in point happened in 2011. However, the Land and Survey Department had revised and strengthened its SOP in December 2012 to prevent similar incident from occurring. Under the new SOP:

- (a) All loss of title applications must be submitted in person at the Land Registry Office; and

- (b) The landowner must sign the application form in front of the Land and Survey Department officers at the counter.

This enhanced procedure ensures the landowner's rights are protected, as applications must now be submitted personally in the presence of state officers *dan inilah juga yang akan kita beri penekanan dalam pindaan Rang Undang-Undang ini untuk memperkukuhkan lagi proses dan prosedur bagi mengelak berulangnya perkara seperti ini.*

Tuan Speaker, kita mengucapkan terima kasih kepada pandangan yang dibuat oleh Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Bawang Assan bagi kegiatan perlombongan diadakan pelan rehabilitasi dan inilah antara pra syarat yang dikenakan sebelum mana-mana lesen dikeluarkan dan kita juga menekankan kepada *downstream activities*.

Tuan Speaker, I would like to emphasize that the passing of this Bill will bring about substantial enhancements to the existing law. These amendments are essential to strengthening Sarawak's land management and administration system, ensuring it remains efficient, adaptable and aligned with current best practices of governance standards. These amendments are pivotal to enhancing service delivery to the *rakyat* and advancing the objectives of the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS) 2030, as we work collectively towards a developed Sarawak for the benefit of all.

Once again, I would like to thank all the Honourable Members for your participation in expressing constructive views and suggestions while debating this Bill which might be taken into consideration in the implementation of the amendment to the Ordinance. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the question before the Dewan is that the Motion standing in the Order Paper in the name of the Honourable Deputy Premier; and Second Minister for Urban Development and Natural Resources; and Member for N.82 Bukit Sari be referred to the Committee of the Whole House. As many as are of the opinion say "Yes".

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Speaker: As many as are of the contrary say "No". The "Yes" have it. The Motion is passed and referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Tuan Speaker: The Dewan shall now resolve into the Committee of the Whole House to consider the Bill which stands committed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

[Tuan Pengerusi mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Tuan Pengerusi: The Dewan shall now consider The Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Clauses 1 to 25

Tuan Pengerusi: The question is that Clauses 1 to 25 are ordered to stand part of the Bill. As many as are of the opinion say "Yes".

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Pengerusi: As many as are of the contrary opinion say "No". The "Yes" have it. Clauses 1 to 25 are ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Enacting Clauses and Title

Tuan Pengerusi: The Dewan shall now resume.

HOUSE RESUMED

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan): Tuan Speaker, I wish to report that the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 has been considered by the Committee of the Whole House and agreed to without amendments.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KETIGA

LAND CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Sumber Asli dan Pembangunan Bandar Kedua; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N.82 Bukit Sari (YB Datuk Amar Awang Tengah bin Ali Hasan): Tuan Speaker, I beg to move that the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be now read the third time and do pass.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the question before the Dewan is that the Land Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read the third time and do pass. As many as are of the opinion say “Yes”.

Government: Yes... (Resounding “Yes”)

Tuan Speaker: As many as are of the contrary opinion say “No”. The “Yes” have it. The Bill is read the third time and passed.

Bill is read a third time and passed

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI YANG KEDUA

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Tuan Speaker, I beg to move the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 to be read a second time.

Tuan Speaker, the latest amendment to the Local Authorities Ordinance, 1996 (Cap. 20) was made in 2020. Therefore, it's considered necessary to update the current development and to amend the provisions in the Ordinance in order to meet the changes and expectations of the present situation.

Currently, there are 27 councils in Sarawak under my ministry including the newly created councils namely, the Gedong District Council, Sebuyau District Council and Siburan District Council. All of these 27 councils are practicing a councillorship system in their administration to serve the public and community in their respective jurisdictions.

As the population grows particularly in areas under the jurisdiction of major councils such as City Councils and Municipal Councils, the needs of the constituents become more diverse and complex. Therefore, it is essential for local representation at the community level be increased to better serve the needs of the people.

Tuan Speaker, the amendment to Section 10, Section 10A and Section 11 is to increase the number of Councillors for Kuching South City Council, Miri City Council and three Municipal Councils namely the Sibu Municipal Council, Padawan Municipal Council and Kota Samarahan Municipal

Council from thirty to a total of 33 Councillors excluding Mayor, Deputy Mayor of City Council, Chairman, Deputy Chairman of Municipal Council. The amendment to Section 172A on the other hand, is to empower the Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri to amend all the Schedules in the Ordinance.

The roles and functions of Councillors have been increasing tremendously in recent years as the front liner of the government machinery. The Councillors are expected to solve the problems or issues on the ground expeditiously beyond ordinary working hours. The City and Municipal Councils are currently overburdened by various workloads, resulting in slower response time which triggers dissatisfaction of the people toward services rendered by the councils. Thus, by increasing the numbers of Councillors in major councils, it will ensure grassroots participation, community engagement and more effective service delivery to the *rakyat*.

Councillors play a vital role in local governance and policy making. As policy makers at local government level, they are to ensure that local priorities and needs are reflected in the decision making. They monitor the services of the councils, follow up on complaints, push for improvement and help to maintain the standards of service delivery. This is because the councillorship system promotes inclusive participation, good governance and would ensure the developments in their areas are more people-driven and locally relevant.

In conclusion, with the passing of this Amendment Bill to increase the number of Councillors, the expectations to deliver efficient and effective services to the people by the councils will be fulfilled. Therefore, I call upon members of this august House to support the Bill. I beg to move, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Another Minister to second.

Menteri Pembangunan Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Kesejahteraan Komuniti; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 56 Dalat (YB Dato Sri Hajah Fatimah Abdullah): I beg to second, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, this is an Amendment Bill, therefore confine your observation and remarks to the Amendments only without opening up the Principal Ordinance. Every speech is confined to 15 minutes. Any members who wish to speak? Honourable Member for Kota Sentosa.

YB Encik Yap Yau Sin: Tuan Speaker, terima kasih atas peluang untuk membahaskan *Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025*, yang bertujuan menambah bilangan Ahli Majlis di Majlis Bandaraya dan Perbandaran daripada 30 kepada 33 orang. Pertambahan ini berpotensi meningkatkan tadbir urus, memperkukuh perwakilan, dan memperbaiki penyampaian perkhidmatan awam. Dengan nisbah Ahli Majlis kepada penduduk yang lebih rendah, setiap komuniti termasuk kejiranan kediaman, kumpulan berkepentingan, dan golongan terpinggir akan mendapat suara yang lebih bermakna dalam proses membuat keputusan di peringkat kerajaan tempatan.

Tuan Speaker, Ahli Majlis berperanan sebagai jambatan antara rakyat dan kerajaan tempatan. Penambahan tiga Ahli Majlis akan menyediakan lebih banyak saluran komunikasi untuk orang ramai menyuarakan kebimbangan, mendapatkan perkhidmatan atau bantuan. Ini secara langsung boleh meningkatkan kecekapan respons terhadap aduan berkaitan isu tempatan seperti pembaikan jalan, sistem perparitan, pemotongan rumput, sanitasi, dan keselamatan awam.

Dengan peningkatan kepada 33 Ahli Majlis, beban kerja dapat diagihkan dengan lebih seimbang, sekali gus mengurangkan keletihan dan meningkatkan produktiviti. Tambahan ini juga membolehkan pelbagai pandangan dan idea diketengahkan dalam Mesyuarat Majlis, menghasilkan dasar yang lebih holistik serta mencerminkan pelbagai kehendak dan keperluan masyarakat. Selain itu, bilangan Ahli Majlis yang lebih ramai dapat memperkukuhkan mekanisme semak dan imbang *check and balance* terhadap pentadbiran kerajaan tempatan. Pemantauan yang lebih rapi terhadap belanjawan, projek, dan pengurusan mampu mengurangkan risiko salah urus dan penyelewengan.

Tuan Speaker, kesimpulannya, penambahan daripada 30 kepada 33 Ahli Majlis bukan sahaja memperkukuhkan aspek perwakilan dan keberkesanan tadbir urus, malah menguatkan asas demokrasi tempatan. Ini adalah langkah proaktif ke arah kerajaan tempatan yang lebih telus, bertanggungjawab, dan responsif terhadap kehendak rakyat. Saya, dengan itu saya menyatakan sokongan penuh terhadap Rang Undang-Undang Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan (Pindaan), 2025 ini. Terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Pending.

YB Puan Voilet Yong Wui Wui: Thank you, Tuan Speaker, this Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeks to increase the number of Councillors from 30 to 33 under Section 10(1)(b)(iii) for the Kuching South City Council Section 10A(1)(c) for Miri City Council and Section 11(c) for the Padawan, Sibü and Kota Samarahan Municipal Council. While this humoral amendment may appear minor from 30 to 33, its implication is not. If we are to increase the number of Councillors, it is also pertinent to improve the effectiveness of their roles. Appointing more Councillors without corresponding effort to strengthen their performance, accountability and community engagement risk compounding existing inefficiencies.

Tuan Speaker, as told by the minister who is tabling this Bill in his introduction, Councillors are entrusted with the responsibility of bridging the gap between the local authority and the people. They are expected to serve diligently or respond to local issues and represent the interest of their communities. But Tuan Speaker, unfortunately in practice and what we had seen on the ground many Councillors across Sarawak or in Kuching particularly remain invisible and disengage from the very community they assigned to serve.

Despite being assigned to specific neighbourhood or zones as what has been practiced by MBKS or DBKU or even MTP, many residents do not even know who their councillors are, let alone how to reach them when issues arise. This reflects a serious disconnect between the councillors and the people. In constituencies especially those held by the opposition representative like Padungan, like Pending, it is often the ADUN, it is often me or Chong who are forced to step in. Inspecting drainage, reporting faulty infrastructure or poor services, no grass cutting services, *longkang* not clean, clogged drain, smelly *longkang* all sorts of problems or even waste collection problem in Kota Sentosa, I have to deal for him because he tells the people, looking for TALIKHIDMAT... *(Interruption)*...

So, for that area, the residence, the shophouse owner looked for me and I helped to solve it. So, these are the functions, among others that rightly falls within the scope of local ... *(Interruption)*...

Tuan Speaker: Are you taking clarification from Kota Sentosa?

YB Puan Violet Yong Wui Wui: No, no. I'll finish first. Before I sit down, I'll give it to him. These are the functions among others that rightly fall within the scope of local councillors. It is troubling that some councillors appear reluctant or perhaps instructed by the *atas*, sometimes we don't know who are the *atas* not to engage openly with opposition representatives.

Tuan Speaker, I have been elected to this House since 2006. Not long, only four terms. Our Premier nine terms. So, are you saying our Premier has been too long staying in this House? So, you better take back your words, okay. Otherwise, you will be marked.

Okay, Tuan Speaker, since 2006, I was elected to this House as an elected rep, not a single councillor ever works closely with us from the opposition. They don't dare. They don't dare to be seen, to be open to work closely with us. Why is it like that? Why are we practicing in such manner when we all, whether councillors or the Yang Berhormats, we are all elected to serve the public. This has been particularly evident within the jurisdiction of MBKS because my area falls under MBKS, so I speak about MBKS. Such an attitude undermines the very essence of public service.

Tuan Speaker, despite political differences, we must never forget that we are all here to serve the people. Public service must never be politicized. I hope the Honourable Member for Batu Kawah who is also the Minister for Public Health, Housing and Local Government tabling this amendment Bill understood this very basic principle. Be a statesman, not a petty politician. Lead by example, upholding the dignity of your office, stop all intimidation practices and partisan pettiness as they have no place in a democratic government.

Tuan Speaker, hence, I propose the following reforms to ensure greater accountability and service delivery of the councillors.

(a) Directive for Cross-Party Cooperation

The ministry must issue a formal directive, a clear directive to all local councils and municipal councils requiring all councillors to work closely with all the elected representatives, including those from the opposition. Why are you laughing? Effective local governance must be built on cooperation and mutual respect, regardless of political affiliation.

(b) Mandatory Ground Engagement

The Councillors should be required to conduct regular site visits, participate in community dialogues, and maintain a visible presence within their assigned areas.

(c) Performance-Based Reporting

Quarterly reports should be submitted detailing public complaints received, resolutions made, and community activities undertaken and these reports should be made public.

(d) Complaint Tracking System

A publicly accessible online platform should be introduced to track complaints, monitor councillor responses, and improve transparency.

Tuan Speaker, let us not merely add to the numbers – let us raise the bar. Let us restore the integrity and purpose of the Councillor's role, not through symbolic appointments, but through meaningful, results-driven service to the *rakyat*. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Baleh.

YB Encik Nicholas Kudi anak Jantai: Tuan Speaker, terlebih dahulu saya ingin merakamkan penghargaan terima kasih kerana memberikan peluang kepada saya untuk turut serta dalam membahaskan Rang Undang-Undang Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan (Pindaan), 2025 di Dewan yang mulia ini. Terima kasih juga kepada Timbalan Premier merangkap Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan Negeri Sarawak di atas Usul Pindaan Rang Undang-Undang Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan, 2025 ini.

Tuan Speaker, dalam membincangkan isu Rang Undang-Undang ini, saya sangat bersetuju dengan saranan Timbalan Premier merangkap Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan Negeri Sarawak dengan penambahan Ahli Majlis iaitu daripada 30 orang kepada 33 orang. Saya mengambil maklum mengenai isu kekurangan ahli-ahli Majlis Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan terutamanya perjawatan kaunselor.

Dengan penambahan ini, sedikit sebanyak beban tugas akan dapat dikongsikan bersama memandangkan kawasan yang dipegang oleh sesebuah Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan adalah sangat luas dan besar. Penambahan perjawatan kaunselor ini juga akan membuka ruang dan peluang untuk masyarakat setempat melahirkan permasalahan dan penambahbaikan di kawasan-kawasan mereka.

Tuan Speaker, memahami peranan kaunselor yang sangat penting di dalam sesebuah komuniti, diharapkan dengan penambahan ini akan dapat mengurangkan sedikit beban mereka di samping dapat memberikan lebih fokus kepada kawasan yang diwakili oleh kaunselor tersebut.

Di kesempatan ini juga, saya ingin menyampaikan penghargaan terima kasih kepada semua kaunselor kita yang terdahulu dan yang sekarang ini atas kesungguhan mereka membantu dan mempermudah urusan bukan sahaja di pejabat Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan malah turut membantu wakil-wakil rakyat di kawasan masing-masing. Terima kasih dan teruskan usaha murni anda semua selaku jambatan antara penduduk setempat dan Kerajaan Sarawak.

Tuan Speaker, dengan penerangan ini, saya sangat optimis dan yakin penambahan perjawatan ini akan memudahkan lagi delegasi urus selia kerja Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan di seluruh Sarawak. Oleh yang demikian saya dengan ini menyokong penuh Rang Undang-Undang Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan (Pindaan), 2025 di Dewan yang mulia ini. Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Member for Tanjong Batu.

YB Encik Johnny Pang Leong Ming: Tuan Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate in the debate of this important Bill, the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025. I rise in full support of the Bill, which seeks to amend the Local Authority Ordinance 1996 (Cap. 20) to increase the maximum number of councillors from 30 to 33 under Sections 10, 10A and 11, and to amend Section 172A to allow the Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri to amend all schedules in the Ordinance.

Tuan Speaker, this amendment may appear procedural, but it reflects the State Government's ongoing efforts to strengthen local governance and improve service delivery. Increasing the number of councillors allows for wider representation, better distribution of workload, and more voices at the table, especially in fast growing urban areas. However, I would like to take this opportunity to raise a matter relevant to my constituency, N.68 Tanjong Batu, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Bintulu Development Authority (BDA) not under any Majlis Perbandaran or Majlis Daerah.

As it stands, BDA is not structured with councillors as provided under the Local Authorities Ordinance. This creates a governance gap, especially on the ground level. Unlike in the municipalities where appointed councillors represent zones, handle local issues, and engage residents directly, constituencies under BDA lack this grassroots machinery. This means that when public complaints arise from blocked drains to licensing disputes to development matters, residents turn directly to the local elected representatives, and by extension, our service centres, for every issue, big or small where we continue to serve diligently, a more structured community-based governance mechanism would greatly improve responsiveness.

Tuan Speaker, in light of this, I humbly propose that BDA explore the establishment of a formal sub-committee, structured to function in a role similar to councillors under whatever permissible framework that may be incorporated into the Bintulu Development Authority Ordinance or by administrative delegation. These sub-committees could be:

- (a) Area based, representing major zones within Bintulu town and nearby areas;
- (b) Composed of community leaders, civil society reps and stakeholders;
- (c) Empowered to receive, investigate and recommend solutions to local complaints;
- (d) And most importantly, serve as the bridge between BDA and the *rakyat* on the ground.

If necessary, a policy paper or subsidiary regulation may be issued to formalise this under BDA's operational mandate since Section 5 of the BDA Ordinance empowered the Authority to form committees for specific purposes.

Tuan Speaker, with the ongoing expansion of Bintulu through the Samalaju Industrial Zone, the central business district, and residential suburbs, we are no longer a small frontier town. We are rapidly evolving into a metropolitan hub. It is time for our governance model to reflect this reality.

While this amendment Bill focuses on councils governed under the Local Authorities Ordinance, I urge that the same spirit of inclusivity, representation and structured local input be extended to areas under statutory bodies like BDA.

Let me be clear, this proposal does not aim to undermine or discredit the commendable work already carried out by BDA. On the contrary, it is intended to complement and support BDA's existing efforts by strengthening its connection with communities on the ground. By introducing a more structured local feedback mechanism, we can ensure that the voices of the *rakyat* are channelled more effectively and consistently, thereby enhancing the responsiveness and reach of BDA's services.

Tuan Speaker, Clause 3 of this Bill also empowers the Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri to amend all schedules in this Ordinance, this is an enabling provision which could, in future support better alignment across various local governance entities, including statutory authorities like BDA. Let us be proactive and forward thinking in using this empowerment for administrative innovation.

In closing, I support the Bill wholeheartedly, and at the same time, respectfully submit my recommendation for BDA to explore the formation of functional local sub-committees, akin to councillors, to better serve the people of Bintulu especially those in N.68 Tanjong Batu. With that, I commend this Bill to the House, and I support the Bill. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli Yang Berhormat bagi Stakan.

YB Datuk Hamzah bin Haji Brahim: Terima kasih, Tuan Speaker atas peluang yang diberikan kepada saya untuk membahaskan *Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025*. Tuan Speaker, saya terpanggil membahaskan isu ini kerana saya pernah berada dalam Majlis Perbandaran walaupun tidak cukup iddah, 5, 6 bulan *jak* Tuan Speaker, tapi saya agak faham apa kekangan, permasalahan di peringkat Majlis Perbandaran. Tuan Speaker, di Sarawak ini ada terbahagi beberapa bahagian ataupun daerah, dalam bandar, pinggir dan luar bandar. Kalau di dalam bandar saya percaya banyak agensi dan pihak-pihak yang bertanggungjawab untuk tanggungjawab tentang permasalahan.

Kalau di luar bandar ada sedikit mudah sebab di kampung banyak Ketua Kampung, Penghulu, Pemanca, Temenggong dan jawatankuasa-jawatankuasa JKK terlibat dalam permasalahan di dalam kampung khususnya, melibatkan jalan raya, parit dan sebagainya. Tetapi saya mengambil sedikit berkenaan dengan, khususnya, dalam kawasan Stakan, yang melibatkan Majlis Perbandaran Kota Samarahan. Kami di sana banyak taman-taman dan perumahan yang mana tidak ada Ketua Kampung, tidak ada Kapitan, tidak ada Penghulu dan sebagainya. Belum ada. Insya-Allah akan ada. Tapi dengan keadaan begitu lah kita memerlukan banyak Kaunselor. Kalau dah dibentangkan oleh Menteri tadi, 33 bagi saya *sik* cukup, *mun dapat* 63. Kalaulah boleh. Sebab dengan penambahan Kaunselor, boleh membantu kita menyelesaikan permasalahan parit dan sebagainya.

Kaunselor saya boleh *call* tengah malam, Tuan Speaker. Pegawai *sik* dapat. Nya ada hak aktiviti masing-masing di malam *ari*. Kaunselor okay kerana kebanyakan Kaunselor kita kenal dan banyak yang kita rekomenkan maksudnya daripada kakitangan yang boleh kita percayai di kalangan Kaunselor-kaunselor. Tapi dalam masa yang sama juga Kaunselor ini banyak membantu kita di peringkat bawahan dan kita amat memerlukan penambahan Kaunselor dan ini akan meringankan tugas kita sebagai wakil rakyat di dalam kawasan.

Jadi Tuan Speaker, saya rasa tidak menjadi masalah penambahan bilangan Kaunselor ini dan Kaunselor ini pun tidak juga membebankan perbelanjaan Kerajaan kerana gaji, elaun Kaunselor bukannya besar. *Nak beli baju kot pun sik cukup elaun daknya tok*. Jadi, apatah lagi ini bukan mata pencarian mereka. Mereka memberikan masa dan ruang untuk membantu komuniti di kawasan seterusnya menjadikan kawasan itu sentiasa ditadbir urus dengan baik sekali. Ini harapan saya. Jadi dalam masa yang sama juga, saya dalam kawasan yang telah disebutkan oleh Menteri tadi

saya amat menyokong penuh dan harapan saya kalau ada penambahan, tambah Kaunselor dalam kawasan saya. Kalau boleh, Menteri.

Jadi, dengan ini Stakan menyokong penuh *Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025*. Sekian, terima kasih.

Tuan Speaker: Yang Berhormat bagi Bukit Assek.

YB Encik Chieng Jin Ek: Tuan Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate of the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

I would like to express my support for the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025. I believe this Bill brings timely and necessary improvements to the Local Authorities Ordinance, 1996 in ways that will strengthen local governance in Sarawak.

Tuan Speaker, before assuming my current role as a Sarawak State Legislative Assemblyman for N.51 Bukit Assek, I had the honour of serving as a local councillor at Sibu Municipal Council for seven years. That experience gave me a deep appreciation for the crucial role that all council levels play. They are, in truth, the frontline of government, the most immediate and visible form of public service delivery to the community. From waste management to urban planning, from licensing to responding to citizen concerns, local authorities are where governance meets the daily lives of the people.

I, therefore, strongly support the amendment to increase the number of Councillors from 30 to 33. This change reflects the growing complexity of urban issues and the need for the broader representation within our Councils. I hope that by expanding the number of Councillors, we should allow for a more inclusive and effective Council, where different segments of society, which including youth, women, professionals, grassroots leaders can be better represented, and this will ultimately improve the responsiveness and accountability of our local authorities.

In addition, as the frontier of government, local Councillors must be well-equipped with knowledge, not only of local issues, but also of broader government policies and the various financial assistance schemes available to the people. Councillors must be trained and empowered to act as effective bridges between the government and the *rakyat*, ensuring that the communities' are aware of, and benefit from, the support systems in place. A well-informed Council is a more proactive and effective Council.

For the information of the Honourable Member for Pending, unfortunately she is not here. When I was a Councillor of the Sibu Municipal Council for seven years, I received many phone calls from Opposition – Ahli Yang Berhormat and their assistants and within my ability, I was more than happy to help. It is the matter of how you ask the Councillors. If you are in the scolding, accusing in such arrogance manners, I believe that no one is willing to extend a helping hand or even assisting you.

Tuan Speaker, this Amendment Bill is not just about the numbers on the paper. It is about equipping our local councils with the capacity, representation, and the legal tools they need to serve our people better and with my background as a former Councillor, I can confidently say this is a step in the right direction. I, therefore, urge all the Honourable Members of this august House to support the Bill. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: Honourable Member for Batu Kitang.

YB Dato Ir. Lo Kheng Chiang: Thank you, Tuan Speaker, for the opportunity to debate on this Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025. I fully support this Amendment Bill. It is timely and necessary

piece of legislation to ensure that our local government framework remains clear responsive and in line with Sarawak evolving administrative landscape.

The Bill is straightforward and addresses the two keys main areas. First layer is the recognition of the following Municipal Councils of Padawan, Miri and Kota Samarahan. This amendment removes any ambiguity and reinforces the legal status of single municipal authorities, and it is important with that we reflect the current realities of governance on the ground. And this Council has long been operational serving growing urban populations and managing increasing responsibilities.

Former recognition in the Ordinance ensures that their authority is not only administrative but statutory and this provides greater legitimacy, governance clarity, and path the way for more efficient public service delivery. As the former Chairman of the Padawan Municipal Council, I know first hand how important statutory clarity is to the day-to-day operations of a local Councils, from planning approvals to waste management and infrastructure development and, by increasing the Padawan Municipal Council with three Councillors serving an area of more than two and a half times size of Singapore with a population of 600,000 people. It is not sufficient as the other Honourable Members' has spoken. It is not sufficient at all, and I would say it is timely to increase our Councillors from 30 to 33 and more, we need more to better serve this City Councils.

The Bill also proposes a simple yet strategic amendments to Section 12(A) of the Ordinance. It seeks to empower the State Cabinet to amend the Schedules in the Ordinance by notification without the need to return to the Dewan for every technical update. And this mechanism enhances flexibility and efficiency. The Schedule could typically include listing such as names of Councils, boundaries, classifications – elements that administrative in nature and subject to change as our town expand, merge or reorganise.

Tuan Speaker, this Bill reflects Sarawak's commitment to good governance, administrative modernisation and ensuring our local authorities are legally empowered and functionally effective. I commend the Honourable Member for N.14 Batu Kawah for tabling this Bill and I fully support this Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Any other Members who wishes to speak? Honourable Member for Bawang Assan.

YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh: Thank you, Tuan Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to participate in the debate of the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025. The purpose amendment to the Sarawak Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 as explained by the Honourable Minister for Local Government is to seek to increase the number of appointed local Councillors from 30 to 33 for City Councils and the Municipal Councils. This change, again as emphasized by the Minister is to aim at enhancing effectiveness and more inclusivity of local governance.

In other words, the additional three Councillors is to allow, I hope the additional three Councillors is to allow greater and more diverse representation of our multiracial society, including various ethnic and professional groups. In so doing, it is also aiming to better address the needs and concerns of different segments of society.

Tuan Speaker, I remember when I was a Minister in charge of Local Government some 15, 20 years ago. When we came to the appointment of Councillors, I was instructed by the Cabinet, and in fact more specifically by the then Chief Minister, the late Tun Taib, that we should appoint three to five Councillors from NGOs and professional groups of various backgrounds and experience who are not linked directly or who are not directly affiliated to any political party.

This is to ensure that the local authorities can better address some specific needs and concerns of the different segments of our community. In other words, a non-partisan councillor must serve the council or the government of the day, regardless of political party affiliation. A non-partisan election is one where candidates will not be under any influence of any political party. In other words, this is to ensure fairness, objectivity, and neutrality.

Moreover, such appointments, I had mentioned just the three additional Councillors, will not be perceived as politically motivated, but seen as being more merit based. This is to enable the government or at least the local authority to gain greater public trust in local government. And so, it is my hope that when appointing the three additional Councillors, the Ministry of Local Government will take into consideration. But I have just suggested selecting qualified candidates from more independent various or non-partisan background. In other words, we will privatised merits over partisanship.

All in all, these additional Councillors must enhance greater representation, strengthen the capacity and efficiency of the...*(Inaudible)*... and improve greater community engagement, as emphasized by the Minister for Local Government. Moreover, the additional councillors can help distribute the workload which overburdened some of the more senior, more hardworking councillors.

Tuan Speaker, in fact, some Councillors from various Councils, MBKS or even the Sibuluan Municipal Council have confided in me that there are too many committees and too many sub-committees, and their workload is tantamount to almost a full-time job at times, they felt burnt out. Most of the Councils, particularly the big Councils, emphasise the need for counsellors to be accessible at all times and be responsive to the residents' needs. And as highlighted by the Minister for Local Government, adding new Councillor would alleviate workload and improve community services, improve community engagement. As highlighted by the Honourable Member for Batu Kintang just now that the Padawan Municipal Council is so large, it manages a jurisdiction covering, how many properties? I think about 60,000, but my research said 81,356 properties and how many residents? 600,000 or more. Can you imagine the workload distributed among just 30 and now 33 Councillors.

Tuan Speaker, in fact I would like to see an additional amendment in this Bill to include greater allowances for the Councillors. Perhaps, we all need to do it because I think the state cabinet can do so without bringing the matter to Dewan Undangan Negeri or even the Ministry of Local Government has the authority to do the allowance adjustment and so on. Of course, in doing so, it may strain local government budget, but greater incentive should be given to Councillors for better service and greater efficiency.

As we emphasise for the Council's role, we always say CARE. CARE, C – co-operative, co-operate with the residents all the time, co-operative. A – approachable. Councillors should be at all times approachable. R – responsive. E is efficient. And so, as we expect Councillors to do more greater incentive ought to be given. Meaning greater allowances for the Councillors for better services and greater efficiency. Tuan Speaker, with these remarks I would like to support the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Thank you.

Tuan Speaker: I now call upon the Honourable Deputy Premier to do the winding up.

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Thank you very much, Tuan Speaker.

First and foremost, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all the Honourable Members who participated in this debate and total of eight persons and supported the motion to amend the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 which comprises the numbers issues especially those are Councillors, who was Councillors before, Honourable Members who are Councillors before sharing their experiences and regarding the number of Councillors, I mean three increase by three, yes, I mean it is a start and also I want to thank the YB for Bawang Assan about take note on the merits and the greater representatives and there is no question that our Councillors are not paid well.

They are actually paid in allowance, a fixed allowance of RM300.00 a month and meeting RM100.00 or maximum seven meetings. If you are meeting more than that, then you are on your own. And so, attending a function is RM50.00 per function, maximum seven. So, we are actually

truly caring and serving the *rakyat*. There is no question about the YB for Pending talking about serving the *rakyat* and raise the bar. I totally agree but unfortunately, she as usual she is not here to listen, you know, and she only speaks, and she doesn't listen. And in terms of, we always look forward to everyone in terms of cooperation mutual respect. Cooperation and mutual respect must start from yourself. You must respect others you know before others respect you. You must cooperate with others before others cooperate with you. And so is not and when you said not politicking right, my always long gone maybe is double standard, double speaking, triple face. And I just want to say that the different Councillors are assigned with different tasks and by the way, Tuan Speaker, I forgot.

As we are speaking about cooperation, we have extremely no issue on cooperating and working very well with YB Anthony Lok. Why doesn't she learn from her Secretary General? And, I have no issue. I even text her and text YB Anthony Lok anytime and he always said if you've got any issue with my YB let me know. So, maybe I might complain a bit more. Only a few YBs not all YBs are like that.

Tuan Speaker, different Councillors are assigned with different tasks. Additional Councillors improve service delivery, such as effective monitoring of projects and services. Governance of local councils are more inclusive, to ensure that development reflects the diversity of the population. The citizens are more likely and prefer to engage with Councillors who are visible, accessible and be able to response to complaints, issues and request faster. Local issues, conflicts and disputes can be effectively resolved with immediate resolution of problems on the ground.

In major councils, issues and workload can affect service delivery to the *rakyat*. Therefore, increasing number of Councillors can improve planning and service delivery as well as strengthening the link between the leaders and the people. This can lead to more equitable, efficient and accountable service delivery, which is the ultimate goal of any local government system.

Tuan Speaker, once again, I would like to thank all the members of this august house who participated in the debate and support the Bill. Thank you very much, Tuan Speaker.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the question for the Dewan is that the motion standing in the order paper in the name of the Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister for Public Health, Housing and Local Government and Member for N.14 Batu Kawah be referred to the Committee of the Whole House. As many as the opinion say "Yes".

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Speaker: As many as contrary opinion say "No". The "Yes" have it. The motion referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Tuan Speaker: The Dewan shall now resolve into the Committee of the Whole House to consider the Bill which stands committed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

[Tuan Pengerusi mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Tuan Pengerusi: The Dewan shall now consider the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Clauses 1 to 3

Tuan Pengerusi: The question is that Clauses 1 to 3 are ordered to stand part of the Bill. As many as opinion say "Yes".

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Pengerusi: As many as contrary say "No". The "Yes" have it. Clauses 1 to 3 are ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Enacting, Clauses and Title

Tuan Pengerusi: The Dewan shall now resume.

HOUSE RESUMED

[Tuan Speaker mempengerusikan Mesyuarat]

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Tuan Speaker, I wish to report that the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 has been considered by the Committee of the Whole House and agreed to without any amendment.

RANG UNDANG-UNDANG KERAJAAN – BACAAN KALI KETIGA

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

Timbalan Premier Sarawak; Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan; dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri N. 14 Batu Kawah (YB Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian): Tuan Speaker, I beg to move the Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 now be read a third time and do pass.

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the question for the Dewan is read. The Local Authorities (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be read a third time and do pass. As many as opinion say "Yes"

Government: Yes... (Resounding "Yes")

Tuan Speaker: As many as contrary say "No". The "Yes" have it. The Bill is read the third time and passed.

Bill is read a third time and passed

Tuan Speaker: Ahli-ahli Yang Berhormat, the sitting is now adjourned, and the House shall resume its sitting at 9.00 a.m. tomorrow.

(Mesyuarat ditangguhkan pada pukul 7.01 petang)