

Premier: Merging of cultures, beliefs, effort vital in pursuit of progress



Abang Johari (second left) officiates at the opening of Icossh 2023 as (from left) Abdul Karim, Ismi and Shahrul look on. – Sarawak Public Communications Unit photo

Yunus Yusop

BINTULU: The convergence of cultures, beliefs and effort for us to develop ourselves is very significant in our pursuit of progress, said Sarawak Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg.

He said this process and interactions occur voluntarily in the state without being forced, and with that sustainable understanding, Sarawak's future is brighter.

He also said social inclusivity is the second pillar of Sarawak's Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030, apart from economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Also, the state government's policy recognises the importance of all ethnic groups in Sarawak to move forward together, he added.

"Tok Nan (late chief minister Pehin Sri Adenan Satem) was very serious of convergence of

ethnicity and culture.

"It becomes a basis for us to move forward and foster mutual respect between the various ethnic groups," he said at the opening of the 3rd International Conference on Science, Social Sciences and Humanities (Icossh) 2023, here yesterday.

Therefore, he added, the establishment of the Pehin Sri Adenan Satem Chair (Tok Nan Chair) by Universiti Putra Malaysia Bintulu campus (UPMKB) is a great platform to conduct holistic research on ethnic groups in Sarawak.

Abang Johari said there could be more ethnic groups or sub-ethnic groups that have yet to be identified, adding that to date, 31 ethnic groups have been documented as Natives of Sarawak.

He assured UPMKB that the Sarawak government would continue supporting its effort via the Tok Nan Chair with more research on ethnicity and culture.

He said this will be a platform to understand the strength and weakness of the sub-groups and then strengthen the groups under one roof.

"Once the weaknesses are rectified, the government can come up with better strategies in order to upgrade the talents. This is very essential when we talk about sustainability as Sarawak is going towards a green economy.

"We want to preserve anything 'green', including culture. It is not just the environment that can be polluted, but also culture because of the influence of other cultures," he pointed out.

Also present were Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Minister Dato Sri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, Universiti Putra Malaysia deputy vice chancellor (Academic and International) Prof Dr Ismi Arif Ismail, UPMKB campus director Prof Dr Shahrul Razid Sarbini, and Bintulu Resident Nyurak Ketu.