

**TEXT OF SPEECH BY
THE CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK
IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS MALAYSIA'S
ROAD SHOW 2017 KUCHING
AT PULLMAN HOTEL, KUCHING
4TH JULY 2017**

1. I am very delighted and honoured to be given the opportunity to officiate at the Board of Engineers Malaysia's Road Show 2017 in Kuching. It is a rare opportunity to be surrounded by so many engineers from Sarawak whom I consider as the building blocks of the state's development as Sarawak is still at the developing stage.
2. For the nation as a whole, I must record my appreciation to engineers for their contributions to nation building when the British administration left Malaysia. In Sarawak, engineers' footprints are found all over the state from network of roads, ports, airports, water supply, power supply system to telecommunication and so on which are essential for the development of a state.
3. Being a big state almost the size of the whole Peninsula Malaysia, the state has set a target to complete the road network by 2030 in order for the state to be fully connected. The Pan Borneo Highway project across the country from East to West from Sarawak to Sabah, will be the main spine of the state that is expected to spur further development along the highway. This vital road connectivity will attract more investors participating in various developments thus unlocking the potential of more hinterland that helps to drive the economic activities for the state.
4. We will expect a hive of economic activities to be supported by infrastructure and utility projects such as power supply and water works. This is where the engineers' professional service will be put to use and may I thank in advance your invaluable contribution to the economic growth of the state as well as the well-being of the people of Sarawak.
5. In the endeavour to speed up the development status of Sarawak, the State Government has some ambitious plans to build more power plants, dams, port expansion and even LRT line as well as projects under the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy. As it is, many foreign investors have moved their manufacturing plants to Sarawak taking cognizance of the land mass, sea route connectivity supported by few ports, government's incentives and most important of all, the ready infrastructure and utility support available and in the pipeline.
6. These projects and plans in the pipelines will involve heavy input from engineers as well as engineering teams. While we appreciate the engineers' contribution to the implementation of these projects and essential services, one must not lose sight of the quality and safety of the works delivered through the highest standard

of professionalism. The recent spate of building failures and short comings of the construction industry as appeared in the papers should be addressed and mitigated.

7. As such, the BEM Road Show is a timely reminder to all practicing engineers of their heavy responsibility and accountability entrusted to them. Along the tide of rapid economic expansion and hive of construction for the state of Sarawak, it is important that all infrastructure and buildings are constructed to comply with established standards as these products are to last a long time.
8. In the light of the above, Sarawak State Government has placed a heavy emphasis on stepping up Human Capital Development as reflected in the recent 2017 budget speech. Priority is placed on technical and vocational education such as the implementation of Centres of Technical Excellence (CENTEX) in Kuching, Lundu and Lawas. The emphasis by President of BEM on regulating the engineering team as a whole ties up well with our Sarawak State government's direction in producing not only whole teams of technical talent, but also of the right quality and conduct on the supply side of the demanding job market.
9. The BEM president's speech highlighted the effect of liberalization of the engineering services in respect of competition with foreign talents. I fully agree with him and this is a good reminder to Sarawak's effort and direction in producing these talent pools to match the above vision and action plan. The training institutions and existing technical personnel should take cognizance of these challenges and not rest on their laurel as the way forward requires constant updating of knowledge and innovative minds.
10. Taking cognizance of the innovation as the way forward for the economic growth within the current competitive economic environment, the Sarawak Government has also embarked on some action plan on digital economy for which some budget has been allocated. With the sweeping changes made through the 4th Industrial Revolution, we cannot be left behind as it is important that local human resource should not only keep up with it but also move further up the curve in order to be more competitive.
11. We may have to invest in our own equipment. We are committed to invest RM 1 billion to start with to ensure that our ICT infrastructure is fit to support the Digital industries, commerce and investment that will be lured to Sarawak. We shall embark and embrace the state-of-the-art technology in data transmission – the Optical Transport Network at Edge – to spur the growth of Sarawak's economy
12. The implementation of various major programmes and projects in 2017 which requires the services of engineering team are as follows:
 - (i) To further improve the connectivity of the State, more roads and bridges would be built;
 - (ii) To continue to extend coverage of water supply especially to the rural population;

- (iii) Accelerating development in the rural areas;
- (iv) Development of industrial estates;
- (v) Providing affordable housing for the rakyat.

13. Sarawak is richly endowed with natural resources. Our people have been living in peace and quiet for many centuries, relying on land, sea and rivers for all their basic needs. We also have oil and gas resources offshore along our long coastline. We have natural resources in timber and plantations, as well as hydropower. We have solar power as we are in the tropics
14. It is therefore of strategic importance that Sarawak should optimize as much as possible our energy resources for our own economic development and industrialization. The Bakun Dam is a commercially viable project where the repayment of the project is covered by the stream of revenues from industries. The Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) can be extended to other parts of Sarawak especially the major urban centres.
15. This is where we need the whole engineering team to utilize our natural resources and propel our development. While acknowledging that challenges ahead are becoming more complex and competitive, we must remain focused in our development agenda. We are now operating in a world which is highly dynamic and volatile. In order for us to be competitive, we ought to continuously broaden our economic base, enhance our knowledge, upgrade our skills, be more efficient, productive and innovative. I am happy to note that BEM has taken positive steps towards not only in upgrading the knowledge of engineers but also inculcating a more pervasive culture of good governance and upholding the highest level of integrity amongst the professionals.
16. On this concluding note, I hereby declare the BEM Road Show 2017 officially open. I hope you will have a fruitful exchange of ideas and gain as much information and updates from BEM representatives present. Thank you.