

**OPENING ADDRESS  
AND OFFICIAL LAUNCHING OF  
2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (ICSE 2017)**

**BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
YAB DATUK AMAR ABANG HAJI  
ABDUL RAHMAN ZOHARI  
BIN TUN DATUK ABANG HAJI OPENG  
THE CHIEF MINISTER OF SARAWAK**

**31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2017  
BORNEO CONVENTION  
CENTRE KUCHING**

Good afternoon,

1. I am very delighted and honoured to be given the opportunity to officiate at this 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Special Education (ICSE 2017) here at Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, Sarawak. It is indeed a rare opportunity and honour to be able to host a conference dedicated to discussion on the development of education for Persons with Disabilities (PWD).
2. Welcome to Sarawak, Land of the mighty bird, the Hornbill which is Sarawak's state bird.
3. I believe this is a much awaited conference for educators especially in Southeast Asia region as well as from all over the world. As the hosting state, the Sarawak Government welcomes all the delegates to our beautiful city of Kuching.
4. For a nation as a whole, I must record my appreciation to the teachers and educators of Special Needs Children for their hard work in providing education to this special group of people among us. It is not an easy task, but someone has to do it, and now I am standing in front of those people who are dedicating their life and time to educate the group of people who needs special care in our society. Thank you for your passion and dedication to be of service to the special people of our societies.
5. I believe that ICSE 2017 present an opportunity for education experts and specialists in the Special Education field to get together and exchange information as well as engage in dialogues to gain insights into the advancement and trend in Special Education. The conference has also gathered renowned keynote and plenary speakers of Special Education from all over the world and the state of Sarawak is honoured to have them here in the conference.
6. I am sure your discussion and deliberation during the conference will add to the much needed knowledge and to contribute to the enhancement of skills, especially for teachers and those involved in Special Education all around Southeast Asia, especially in Sarawak. Meaningful and directed discussion on Special Education should breed innovative ideas and also create opportunities for networking and programmes of inter-collaboration between organizations as well as countries.

7. The State of Sarawak has always been supportive of agendas, programmes and events related to the development of Persons with Disabilities (PWD). Here in Sarawak, I am happy to say that our personnel are actively involved in awareness programmes and activities to create awareness on the needs and rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in order to be able to live a normal life and be successful in their areas of interest. Co-organizing this conference with SEAMEO SEN is part of the overall efforts that Sarawak is taking as a measure reflecting the initiative towards the nation's global Education Agenda 2030.
8. The success of the conference is of course very important as it will contribute to the growing global awareness to provide opportunities of access and engagement for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) by way of accommodating their specialized needs, especially to create learning environment conducive for them to thrive. I sincerely hope that the proposed education agenda in ICSE 2017 for Special Education is met and well implemented in the Southeast Asian region in the near future.
9. I would like to reaffirm Sarawak's commitment to ensure that programs related to Persons with Disabilities (PWD) would be given the opportunity, space, time and the necessary resources to be successful, and be of benefits to our PWD. I truly hope that ICSE 2017 will leave a lasting impact on all the participants here.
10. While you are here in Beautiful Kuching, please do explore the city and its surrounding. And I do hope you will go home with fond memories of us.
11. I wish all of you a fruitful conference and once again welcome to Sarawak, Land of the Hornbills.

Thank you.