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WATER MANAGEMENT: Awang Tengah (third left) visits one of the 20 booths at the exhibition. At second left is Zahdi and at right is Entri.

'Crucial to address reliability, quality of water supply'

KUCHING: Stakeholders in the water industry are urged to comply with international practices of integrated water resource management (IWRM) and integrated river basin management to ensure a sustainable resource.

In Sarawak, which is endowed with several huge water resources for potable water supply and power generation, it was crucial for the stakeholders to address the issue of reliability and quality of water supply, said Minister of Public Utilities Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hassan at the launch of Borneo Water and Wastewater Exhibition 2012 here yesterday.

Awang Tengah, who represented Chief Minister Pehin Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud at the function, also said that the state government was making huge progress in providing potable water to the population.

“In order to ensure adequate raw water sources, dams, reservoirs and raw water transfers have been and will be continuously constructed,” said Awang Tengah, who is the Second Minister of Resource Planning and Environment.

He also said that the state had significantly gazetted vast areas of forests for the purpose of water catchments which excluded areas under totally protected forests and national parks.

He also said that due to the geographical landscape and the scattered population in the state, alternative water supply systems had been designed and built to cater for the remote communities.

Touching on the exhibition organised by Malaysian Water Association and supported by the state government, he said that it was a landmark occasion for the Sarawak water industry.

He said the exhibition was part of the government’s quest to make Malaysia, particularly Sarawak in raising its level of efficiency and effectiveness in the water industry to a more sustainable level.

He said that the event, held for the first time in Sarawak, would see leaders of water operators from all over Malaysia attending the CEO’s meeting.

“The exhibition is the right forum for the industry players to share their knowledge and experience in finding practical solutions.

“Building the right capacity and capability are among important ingredients in the journey to achieve excellence in the water industries,” he said.

He also said that the roles of all the operators, suppliers, consultant as well as the Malaysian Water Academy were useful to develop the state’s human resources and produce potable water that meets the international standards.

Awang Tengah also touched on the sewerage system in the state where much effort had been made to provide proper central sewerage treatment facilities in the urban areas.

“This is to ensure that raw water sources needed by the water supply operators are well protected for providing the potable water.”

He also urged all water operators in the state to mirror the Sibul Water Board for making Sibul as the first in Malaysia to be a chlorine gas-free town.

Also during the exhibition, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) was awarded the Pehin Sri award for their contribution and research towards the sustainability of water in the state. The award carries a cash prize of RM10,000.

Also present at the launch were Assistant Minister of Public Utilities (Water Supply) Datuk Sylvester Entri, Assistant Minister of Environment Datu Len Talif Salleh, Assistant Minister of Resource Planning Datuk Mohd Naroden Majais, Assistant Minister for Culture and Heritage Liwan Lagang and president of Malaysian Water Association president Ahmad Zahdi Jamil.

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