



■ **Dr Chan:** Govt keen to see more development in diverse fields relevant to State's future needs

Research fund for Sarawak soon

by Nathan Achuk

KUCHING – The State Government will announce a research fund soon to spur research and development in Sarawak, disclosed Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam yesterday.

Speaking to reporters after officiating at the Engineering and Technology Conference 2003 (EnTech 2003) organised by Universiti Sarawak Malaysia (Unimas), he said the State government was keen to see more research and development in diverse fields relevant to the State's future needs.

"With this fund, people can apply to do whatever research they want to conduct and we hope to institutionalise it instead having it on an ad-hoc basis as this will make it much more effective and efficient," he said.

Dr Chan said the current funding was for research and development in soft soil engineering, which was being carried out by Curtin University in Miri.

On the construction of a new Federal Complex northwest of Kuching City, he said the project had been shelved after the 1997 economic crisis.

He added that so far, there was "no further signal" from the Federal government on the project even though about RM50 millions had been put aside at the initial stage.

Earlier on, Dr Chan commended Unimas for the timely organisation of the conference.

He pointed out in today's shrinking world - where the impacts of globalisation, trade liberalisation and knowledge economy were obvious - engineers and technologists had to be flexible in order to adapt to ever-changing scenarios in terms of job placement and challenges.

In addition to the mastery of ICT, engineering management and environmental awareness, Dr Chan pointed out that one of the characteristics of engineers in the 21st Century was the mastery of the English language in order to compete on a level playing field internationally.



OFFICIAL OPENING... Dr Chan (second from right) hitting a gong to symbolically launch EnTech 2003 while (from left) the Organising Chairman Dr Awangku Abdul Rahman Pengiran Haji Yusuf, Unimas Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Yusuf Hadi and Sarawak Institute of Engineers Chairman Datu Hubert Thian Thian Chong Hui look on. PHOTOGRAPH: NORDIN MD DIAH

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As such, he called for more collaboration between public and private institutions of higher learning in order to position the State strategically in the competitive world and reiterated the government commitment to the establishment of the proposed Engineering Research Centre in Kota Samarahan, another hub of higher learning in Sarawak.

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