

# Unimas heads consortium to produce skilled workers

By Churchill Edward

**KOTA SAMARAHAN:** Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) has been entrusted by the state to spearhead U-SCORE - a consortium of various higher learning institutions in Sarawak aiming to contribute positively to the development of the SCORE.

SCORE is the initials for Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy, the biggest and most important development plan that has ever been undertaken by the Sarawak government.

Unimas vice chancellor Prof Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid said U-SCORE would endeavor to produce a skilled workforce required by industries within SCORE and to conduct research relevant to its long term development.

Unimas saw this responsibility as recognition as well as an honour for its research achievements, he said at the fourth session of Unimas' 12th convocation here yesterday morning.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Unimas, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Bujang Mohd Nor officiated at the session.

In its efforts to create greater awareness on global challenges among the students, Khairuddin said Unimas just had to promote itself overseas.

"The time has come for Unimas to intensify its efforts in order to promote itself internationally and such effort is now on-going," he said.

SCORE is one of the five regional development corridors being developed throughout the country, according to the state government souvenir book, 'Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy - An Overview'.

The development within the corridor is set to generate vast economic, business and employment opportunities and also will lead to the development of infrastructure, utilities, infrastructure, and social amenities.

Most importantly, it would provide people with abundant opportunities



WE'VE MADE IT: Unimas students celebrate after the graduation ceremony. — Photos by Churchill Edward

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Prof Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid, Unimas vice chancellor

such as jobs, businesses and investments in addition to urbanising rural areas.

SCORE is located within Sarawak's central region and stretches 320 kilometres along the coast from Tanjung Manis in Mukah to Similajau in Bintulu, extending all the way into the surrounding areas and the extensive and remote hinterland.

It covers an area of 70,709 sq km with a population of 607,800 people.

Basically, it consists of many settlement and urban centres such as Sibu, Bintulu, Mukah, Sarikei and Kapit.

The core of the Sarawak Corridor is the energy resources, particularly hydropower (28,000 MW); coal (1.46 billion tonnes) and; natural gas (40.9 trillion square cubic feet) found abundantly within the central region.

These resources will allow Sarawak to price its energy competitively and encourage investments of energy-intensive industries that will act as triggers in the development of a vibrant industrial development in

the Corridor.

Many other opportunities will also exist to broaden the industrial and economic base in the corridor, including resource-based industries and many other modern services which will be supported by investments in basic infrastructure development such as roads, airports, ports and power supply.

Such opportunities lay the very foundation of widespread and sustainable development in the Corridor and beyond.

While SCORE welcomes all types of investments from local and foreign direct investors, ten industries have been identified as priority industries:

They are the oil-based industry; aluminium industry; steel industry; glass industry; tourism industry; palm oil industry; timber-based industry; livestock industry; aquaculture industry and marine engineering industry.

These priority industries will be promoted and developed extensively through greater private

sector participation.

When SCORE becomes fully implemented, it is estimated that there will be more jobs than people available to work so no one will be left out from its development.

The local manpower will be insufficient for fully developing SCORE in initial years.

Hence the state will need to hire non-Sarawakians for their talents and expertise.

In turn, Sarawakians must be able to work together with these external employees in order to achieve a win-win situation.

By creating more jobs, the state will be able to retain its people to work and live in Sarawak and the opportunities may even attract those who are working abroad.

The other four economic corridors are the Iskandar Development Region at the southern tip of Peninsular Malaysia; the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER), the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) and; the Sabah Development Corridor (SDC).

The three-day Unimas 12th convocation was divided into five sessions.

It ended yesterday with a total of 1,597 graduating students.