

Unimas proposal to set base in SCORE

By Samuel Aubrey

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) is negotiating with the state government to set up a 'base' in the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE).

Its vice-chancellor Professor Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid said yesterday either a campus, technology park or research centre would give Unimas a physical presence in the central region of the state.

Unimas was recently appointed to coordinate 'U-Score', a programme to develop skilled workers for SCORE involving all public and private higher learning institutions in Sarawak.

"The base would enable us to contribute directly to the development of SCORE. It would be difficult to do that

from our campus in Samarahan. We have already expressed this desire to the chief minister and he said it was a reasonable request. He has asked us to come up with a proposal," he said to reporters yesterday after an exhibition and forum, 'Volunteering at Home and Abroad: From Sarawak to the World' at Pustaka Negeri.

On U-Score, Khairuddin said it would not only comprise manpower training, but also to form a research group to conduct studies on renewable energy sources such as hydropower, coal, biomass, wind and solar.

The key elements of SCORE are energy, physical infrastructure, manpower and institutional setup, particularly the establishment of the Regional Corridor Development Authority (Recoda).

The planned investments

for SCORE are RM61 billion in physical infrastructure, RM3 billion in human capital, RM3 billion in institutional infrastructure, RM67 billion in power sector and RM200 billion in industries.

SCORE's 10 priority industries are aluminium, steel, oil-based, glass, palm oil, fishing and aquaculture, livestock, timber-based, marine and tourism.

Discussions had been held to work out collaborations with Australia's Rio Tinto Group, Sarawak Aluminium Company and Central Queensland University, Australia, said Khairuddin.

"This is for collaborations on high-level training for engineers," he said, adding that Unimas also worked together with peninsula and overseas universities.

On another related matter, Khairuddin did not discount the possibility of Unimas re-

'Give Unimas presence in the central region'

aligning its existing programmes to meet SCORE's requirements.

He revealed that a Degree in Chemical Engineering which will commence next year is one of the new programmes to be introduced by Unimas.

"There is a tendency now to re-look at our programmes," he said.

Unimas currently offers 40 degree programmes. Its current student population of 7,000 is expected to grow to 20,000 by 2020.



NEW PLANS: Khairuddin speaks to reporters at Pustaka Negeri in Kuching. — Photo by Johnathan Bullet