

on 17 October 2012



A more open government

KUCHING: The government today is more open in its efforts to upgrade the efficiency of its administration system.

The government is also serious in wanting to eradicate unhealthy culture and practices to ensure the success of development programmes implemented for the benefit of the people.

"These are the things we should support; policies which are more people-orientated and aimed at resolving problems from a more comprehensive perspective," said Chief Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud when speaking at the third session of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's (UNIMAS) 16th convocation held at the DeTAR PUTRA UNIMAS in Kota Samarahan near here, yesterday.

He said today, more opportunities were given to the people, including university students, to voice opinions through the amendment in the University and University College Act, 1971.

Students now have more freedom and can voice their opinions through the right channels, but Taib, who is also Pro-Chancellor of UNIMAS, warned against unchecked assimilation of information, particularly on Internet, which could not be controlled.

"You graduates, as today's young generation, need to be more critical in filtering and receiving any information so as to be able to arrive at the truth," he advised.

He pointed out that the national transformation agenda conceived by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak was aimed to boost the nation's development without sidelining any community.

Many initiatives or programmes such as the 1Malaysia concept, New Economic Model, Government Transformation Programme, National Key Result Area and Innovation Leap had been introduced and all these proved the sincerity of the government in wanting the people to progress, regardless of race, religion or state, said the Chief Minister.

"At the same time, development of the rural areas is not forgotten. Sarawak and Sabah are given the emphasis as the two states still need many development projects, the implementation of which will be more challenging because of the sizes of both states.

"Development programmes implemented have shown results.

For example, today the rates of poverty and crime have been lowered. The social economic development of the nation continues to grow at a rate that we can be proud of. As such, the transformation programmes have brought about a positive outcome for all in the society," pointed out Taib, while at the same time, reminded the graduates that their contributions to the nation would not be limited to their expertise as they could also help to come up with better programmes or plans to enhance the well-being of the nation.

He revealed that Sarawak had significantly reduced the number of hardcore poor families compared to 30 years ago and that there were more institutions of higher learning in the state now offering opportunities for rural youths to escape from poverty.

He said Sarawak had developed well and he cited as an example in Kota Samarahan which could boast of having Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) campus, UNIMAS, Tun Razak Teachers' Training Institute, the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) complex, Salcra headquarters, as well as the largest shopping centre which was currently under construction.

"The population of Kota Samarahan has increased suddenly," he said, adding this was the transformation of a rural area to an urban town.

Taib also said that Mukah and Bintulu were also changing fast to become important industrial centres, possibly developing at faster rate than Kuching or Miri.

THE Chief Minister said Sarawak had entered a new era of development with global economic focus on industries, biotechnology and tourism, in line with the development of the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE).

"We have developments in Samalaju, Bintulu and Tanjung Manis in Mukah which can attract foreign and domestic investors who are capable of boosting the state's economy with large industrial projects.

"As the result of this, there is the demand for knowledgeable and skilled manpower which you graduates can meet. The industries in SCORE alone will need some 1.5 million skilled and semi-skilled workers," Taib pointed out.

With that, he urged the graduates to be prepared for the job opportunities ahead.

The Chief Minister reminded that the people must understand and appreciate the various initiatives and programmes launched by the government in its transformation effort so that they would have positive and fruitful impacts.

“For example, the National Innovation Programme will not be successful if the concept and objectives are not embraced by the people. Local universities play an important role in producing graduates who are creative and innovative as well as competitive, but innovation needs to be practised in all scholarly endeavours or activities,” he said.

He commended UNIMAS for its efforts in the development of Sarawak, including the development of SCORE, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), green and renewable energy, biodiversity, community health and medicine, innovation and optimisation of the sago industry, as well as the development of the rural community.

He urged the university to intensify its efforts in harnessing local knowledge which could be shared with all communities.

“The duty of a university in developing ethical, skilled, responsible and committed human capital is big, and you the graduates ought to be always mindful of this as you are the future hope of the nation.

“Success is a journey and not a destination. Therefore it can only be achieved with you wanting to take the first step and persevere through hard work,” he advised.

Meanwhile, the third session of the convocation yesterday morning saw 448 graduates receive their scrolls from the Chief Minister.

The graduates comprised 54 from the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, 242 from the Faculty of Engineering and 152 from the Faculty of Social Science.

Among those present were Chief Minister’s wife Puan Sri Ragad Kurdi Taib, Chairman of UNIMAS Board of Directors Datu Dr Hatta Solhi and Vice- Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Khairuddin Ab Hamid.

Source : Sarawak Tribune