

**SPEECH BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
PREMIER OF SARAWAK  
DATUK PATINGGI TAN SRI (DR) ABANG HAJI ABDUL  
RAHMAN ZOHARI BIN TUN DATUK ABANG HAJI OPENG  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SIGNING OF  
MOU BETWEEN SARAWAK ENERGY & CIDB  
16 AUGUST 2022 @10.30 AM  
BCCK**

**Salutations**

Assalamualaikum and good morning,

1. I am pleased to join all of you for this Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony between Sarawak Energy and the Construction Industry Development Board or CIDB.
2. I understand that Sarawak Energy is the first government-linked company from the state to sign a MoU with CIDB for competency building through the provision of trade training for the purpose of ensuring compliance to Act 520.

- This will significantly improve the capacity and capabilities of our local construction workers, ensuring that they not only meet the development needs of Sarawak Energy but the state at large.

- It will also ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to execute works in full compliance with all legal requirements while ensuring the safety of everybody involved.

3. Congratulations to both organisations for being proactive in embarking on this important collaboration which is expected to yield important benefits for Sarawak and the nation at large.

4. In addition to accelerating Sarawak's energy sector and overall socio-economic growth, the enhancement of our local skill-pool will pay great dividends for other local infrastructure developments – progressing us towards becoming a developed state by 2030.

5. There are vast developments taking place across the state, which require skilled and competent Sarawakian workforce to meet the workforce demand and to ensure timely delivery of the development projects.

6. This need was made very evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when we faced significant shortage of workers due to non-arrival of foreign workers cause by COVID related restriction – this has led to project delays.

7. The training of local workers will prevent such delays from happening again in the event of a future crisis of similar nature, as we will be fully prepared with a sufficient local competent workforce.

8. Furthermore, elevating the skills of local workers through training programmes – like the ones that CIDB and Sarawak Energy will jointly embark on – also supports the government’s efforts to elevate our people’s standard of living.

9. By building up the capacity and capabilities of manpower in Sarawak, local contractors will be able to source workers locally – easing the burden of having to look for them abroad.

10. This will also benefit project delivery, as exemplified by the timely delivery of Sarawak Energy’s substation projects which are largely dependent on our local workforce.

11. At the same time, I would like to remind contractors to keep the wellbeing of their workers in mind. The health, safety and remuneration of workers should be a priority to retain them in the construction industry.

12. Innovation and modernisation will play a key role here, with the newest technologies allowing workers to conduct their daily duties in safer, more efficient ways.

Ladies & gentlemen,

13. To develop a robust and skilled workforce, including those in the construction sector, the federal and state governments have consistently invested in important training facilities, like the Centre of Technical Excellence or CENTEX, and institutions such as CIDB.

14. These facilities and institutions are supplemented by appropriate training programmes – many of which are developed through partnerships between the private sector and government, such as the one that was established between Sarawak Energy and CIDB today.

15. Sarawak Energy has been particularly proactive in its efforts to provide development opportunities and support for their employees and contractors – launching internal programmes and searching for collaborations to further this goal.

16. I hope other corporations will look towards their example and invest in similar initiatives for their own people.

17. Sarawak Energy has also been at the forefront of the renewable energy sector – developing projects to benefit Sarawak and the region at large. The success of these endeavours will be dependent on the assistance received from contractors and their workers, which makes upskilling and training them even more important.

18. As such, the Sarawak Government will continue supporting all efforts to develop our people's capabilities.

19. I believe that both state and federal agencies will look to accelerate the development of Sarawak's skill-pool, not just as it pertains to the construction sector but all industries within Sarawak.

20. Lastly, I believe that this MoU will facilitate the accrediting of more training providers within Sarawak who fulfil the necessary criteria. This will create more opportunities for training and upskilling within the state, greatly increasing numbers of skilled and competent workers.

21. I would like to take this time to thank CIDB and Sarawak Energy once again for coming to an agreement on this important MoU – I know that your joint efforts will be at the forefront of Sarawak's growth.

22. I look forward to seeing what outcomes your collaboration will bring.

23. However, there is still more that can be done – this is the first step in a long journey for all of us.

24. Thank you.