

**SPEECH FOR THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
PREMIER OF SARAWAK
IN CONJUNCTION WITH
IEM SARAWAK ANNUAL DINNER 2022
IMPERIAL HOTEL, KUCHING**

**DINNER THEME:
DIGITALIZING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, salam sejahtera, and Salam Ibu Pertiwiku

Salutations & greetings

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Thank you to The Institution of Engineers Malaysia Sarawak for inviting me to this annual dinner and to deliver a keynote address before our respected local engineering community.
2. I am glad to see so many engineers assembled here tonight after a lapse of 3-years as a result of the pandemic. There are

seasoned engineers as well as new engineers here but what is important is that all of you are key players in realizing Sarawak's vision to be a developed economy with high income by 2030. As Albert Einstein once said, "Scientists investigate that which already is. Engineers create that which has never been."

3. The theme tonight "**Digitalization towards Sustainability**" is most apt as we strive to digitalize and ensure the sustainability of our economy. It is our mission to create and develop a sustainable environment while moving towards global digitalization and Industry 4.0.

4. I must say that as engineers in various disciplines you are a group of professionals who will give Sarawak the engineering capability to achieve what we have set out to do in the years towards 2030. What is particularly important is for us to upgrade our infrastructures - our roads, bridges, electricity and water supplies, telecommunications facilities, public transport, ports, airports, etc. Without good infrastructure we will not get there by 2030.

Digitalization

5. These 3 years have been very challenging as the pandemic has caused health and economic hardships in every sector and affected the livelihood of the people. But on the bright side, the pandemic has stimulated digitalization across various sectors as more businesses utilize technologies such as the Internet-of-Things, big data, and blockchain, meanwhile adopting the work-from-home practice as the new normal.

6. Such changes have uplifted our progress towards reaching the goal of the economic digitalization of Sarawak. To fulfil that objective, I have recently launched the Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030 that shall see Sarawak's focus on developing potential sectors and new resources, such as hydrogen, CCUS and carbon trading.

7. One of the main enablers is digital transformation. Digital Transformation in this context means adopting and utilizing digital technology to modernize traditional ways of delivering services and operating businesses, as well as to enhance efficiency and productivity in the economic sectors of Sarawak. Therefore, it is vital for the public and private sector economies to quickly and effectively adapt themselves to the current pace

of our State digitalization movement by using and getting used to technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality.

8. As for the government sector, initiatives such as spatial and geographical information systems and building information modelling (BIM) platforms and many more have been introduced. The government has been working extensively with SAINS on some of the most comprehensive geospatial solutions in Malaysia and providing various geospatial services for both the public and private sectors. Their GIS systems are the backbone of many government solutions, including our Land Management Solution and Local Authority Solution. A year ago, Sarawak Multimedia Authority collaborated with JKR Sarawak and the Akademi Binaan Malaysia (ABM) for a Building Information Modelling proficiency training programme.

9. I was also being informed that IEM Sarawak, as a learned organization, plans to build an educational and digital lab with an integrated BIM platform and other engineering software for students and working engineers. This is good development in order to bridge the industrial knowledge gaps especially in embracing artificial intelligence or AI in all the industries.

10. I am very pleased and supportive of this plan as the government is also looking for avenues to develop digital talents through the digital academy and digital upskilling programmes. The direction in which IEM Sarawak is going with the proposed digital lab is commendable indeed in order to produce more digital talents among Sarawakians.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Digital Risks

11. While we are striving to place ourselves at the forefront of the world's digitalization, let us not forget about the risks that come with it – i.e. cybersecurity risks.

12. There are findings from Trend Micro's biannual Cyber Risk Index report, which measures the gap between the cybersecurity readiness of the clients versus their likelihood of being attacked. On a scale of -10 to 10, with -10 being the riskiest and 10 being the safest, our current position is at 0.08.

13. The CRI also reported that 58% would very likely suffer critical cyber attacks in the next 12 months, 30% had suffered more than seven network and systems infiltration attacks, 14%

had their information assets breached more than seven times, and 21% encountered more than seven customer data breaches over the past year. Engineers are no exception to this. Eventually, you will have to deal with huge scale of data in every task and so I am sure you are well aware and understand the risks.

14. Therefore, we must return to the basics, identifying the critical data at risk, focusing on the threats that matter most to our economic sectors, and delivering multi-layered protection from comprehensive, connected platforms. I put up this challenge to IEM Sarawak Branch as one of our local engineering institutions to educate and train engineers for digitalization and cybersecurity.

Innovation

15. Innovation is also a key enabler to fulfilling our goal for a sustainable digital economy. Innovation across the key economic sectors in Sarawak will enhance productivity, and develop new solutions and products for domestic and export markets.

16. Leveraging on the natural resources in Sarawak, innovation will focus on developing R&D capabilities and commercial

applications aligned to technologies, digital applications, and renewable energy. One of our initiatives is to set in motion a digital R&D innovation center with digital test-bed and living labs.

17. IEM Sarawak has made known of its intention to me to establish an educational hub for students and working engineers in order to provide an avenue for them to be exposed to current engineering issues, share ideas, and develop personal skills. I fully support this idea which eventually could be turned into a facility similar to a digital test lab for the purpose of R & D. The Sarawak's budget allocation for 2022 that mounts to RM67 million shows the importance that is placed on R & D to add value to our resources.

18. I have visited the Shell Research Centre in Amsterdam and the Petronas Research Centre in Bangi and was introduced to many of their innovative creations. They have successfully engineered many new things in the oil and gas industry which we should emulate in Sarawak in order to develop our home-grown engineering expertise.

Regional Strength of Engineers

19. IEM Sarawak has been growing steadily with the current robust economic development in Sarawak, especially with the implementation of the Sarawak Digital Economy Strategy 2018 - 2022. I understand IEM Sarawak has over 2,000 local registered engineers and is still the largest professional body in Sarawak. I have been told that there are 10,432 Professional Engineers with Practising Certificates in Sarawak, and another 9,465 Professional Engineers are on their way to obtaining their Professional Practising Certificates. These are the unsung heroes pivotal to the development of the state to reach greater heights.

20. The numbers speak volumes about the importance of the engineering institution to the engineering fraternity. The engineers have a strong culture of independence that has successfully shaped the society ethical conduct and activities of the development in the state. Most importantly, engineers are governed by a professional code of conduct and regulations. It is undeniable that engineers are crucial to the future of Sarawak.

Closing

21. Lastly, it is a job well done by IEM Sarawak, especially to the Organising Committee Members, for successfully organizing

a dinner with a theme that supports the government's programme to create a new economic environment.

22. With that, I would like to take this opportunity to wish IEM all the best in its efforts to contribute to Sarawak's digital and sustainable economy initiatives. Thank you all and enjoy the evening.