

13/04/1997

Adopt 'Kita Boleh' concept, urges Taib

KUCHING, Sat. - Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud today urged Bumiputeras in the State to accept Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's Kita Boleh (We Can) concept to improve themselves.

Taib said this forward-looking concept, which was based on vision and courage, was one of the key elements why Dr Mahathir's administration was successful.

"We must abandon the old perspective which is narrow and fearful of the other races.

"This is the mindset of the colonial era which makes us feel small. We must strive to adapt ourselves to changes," he said when opening the two-day Bumiputera Unity Congress this morning.

The Congress, which was attended by about 600 participants at the Damai Lagoon Resort, was jointly organised by Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, Sarawak Malay Cultural Foundation, and the Sarawak Dayak Cultural Foundation.

Taib added that the total number of Bumiputera millionaires in the State remained small compared to the other races despite their success in business endeavours.

He emphasised the need to enlarge the number of Bumiputera businessmen and criticised those who undermined the ability of their own race.

Taib said there were those who preferred to wait for "hand-outs" from the Government rather than work hard for success.

On unity, Taib said the State had developed rapidly over the past 15 years because the various races in the State were willing to support and work together for a common cause.

"Development is the greatest vehicle to achieve and maintain unity and create a new reality.

"This new reality is that we are all Anak Sarawak, Rakyat Malaysia," he said.

Taib said the transformation, which had taken place in the State in the past 30 years, was much more than what the State had seen in the last 300 years.

Before Independence, for instance, less than 20 per cent of the population had the privilege to live in the urban areas.

But today, the figure had increased to nearly 50 per cent and was still growing. "As recently as 15 years ago, poverty was about 50 per cent but we have managed to bring it down to about 20 per cent today."

Taib also reiterated the need for owners of Native Customary Rights land to develop their land for commercial agriculture.

(END)