

24 FEB 1997

Bakun-Masing

BAKUN TRUST FUND STILL SHORT OF RM5 MILLION

KUCHING, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- The Bakun Trust Fund, which was launched last year to benefit people directly affected by the Bakun hydroelectric dam project, is still waiting for another RM5 million in contribution pledged by the project management.

Fund chairman Dr James Jemut Masing said today that so far no official reply or confirmation had been received from the project management despite written communication on the matter.

"This has caused us a little problem in terms of organising the fund properly and we hope the Bakun project management will take the necessary action soon," he told reporters at his office, here.

Dr Masing said he had expressed concern on this matter as the Bakun Trust Fund would start awarding scholarships to deserving students this year and proper financial management was needed to cater to the needs of potential students to pursue their studies.

So far, the Bakun Trust Fund launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has received a total of RM10 million -- RM5 million contribution from Sarawak state government and another RM5 million from the federal government.

On the Bakun Charitable Trust Fund Scholarship, he said application forms would be distributed through all district offices in Kapit Division including district offices in Belaga, Kapit and Song as well as the Yayasan Sarawak office in Kuching.

Sponsorship would be given to those from Belaga District who wish to take short courses in brick-laying, carpentry, welding and mechanical training, he said, adding that these courses would enable the Belaga residents to be gainfully employed by the construction of the Bakun dam.

Dr Masing, who is also state Tourism Minister, said a short training course in business management would be conducted by the Bakun Trust Fund in Belaga District and institutions like Mara and the State Training Centre would be invited to act as trainers.

"The date of commencement for these training courses will depend on the response by the people from the district," he added. -- BERNAMA

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