

08 JUL 1997

Bakun-Fund

BAKUN TRUST FUND STILL SHORT OF RM5 MILLION

BINTULU, July 8 (Bernama) -- The Bakun Trust Fund launched last August to help the residents directly affected by the Bakun hydroelectric dam project is still waiting for the RM5 million contribution pledged by the Bakun management.

Fund chairman Dr James Jemut Masing said today that so far he had not received any word from the project management about the contribution.

"I don't know when the contribution will be given but I believe they will give it at the appropriate time," he told reporters after opening a five-day workshop on "Social and Cultural Issues Including Business Opportunities for Belaga Women," here,

So far, the fund which Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had described as the first in the world to help residents affected by a hydroelectric dam project, has received RM5 million each from the Sarawak and the federal governments. The Bakun management is to give another RM5 million.

Dr Masing, who is Sarawak Tourism Minister, said however, that the amount in the fund was sufficient to give scholarships to the Belaga residents to further their studies.

He said 50 applications had been received for scholarships to pursue studies at the diploma and degree levels.

"We have also given scholarships to 10 students studying at the Sarawak Skills Development Centre," he said.

Sixty long-house residents are attending the workshop organised by the Bakun Development Committee and funded by the Bakun Trust Fund. -- BERNAMA  
RDY JK