

29/12/1997

Successful Orang Asli urged to help community

Sufi Yusoff

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Orang Asli needs members of their community who have been successful in various fields to return and help improve the living standards of the community.

Sulong Ngobat, an Orang Asli and active member of the Gombak 12th Mile 4B Youth Movement, today said not many successful Orang Asli members were willing to return.

"They play a very important role as those who have been exposed to life outside their community can help the rest."

He said this when met at the Koperasi Kancil Mas Berhad's annual general meeting here. Sulong, an administrative assistant at the Police Department, is also a KKMB member.

The majority of KKMB members are Orang Asli.

Sulong said most Orang Asli who had become professionals or government officers received scholarships and other forms of assistance from the Government.

"The scholarships are intended to help improve the community's living standard. It defeats the whole purpose when those who are successful do not return to help their community," he said.

Meanwhile, he also called on the KKMB to "think commercial" in their ventures to improve the welfare of the Orang Asli, adding that the professional Orang Asli could also lend their support by providing input to the KKMB.

"We already have skilled workforce in furniture making. Perhaps joint ventures with successful companies can be established so that we can improve the quality and marketing of our goods.

"We need to think commercial if we want to progress and our people need to be exposed to modern ways. We used to look for rattan to sell to furniture manufacturers. That cannot continue. We need to develop that rattan and turn it into something of added value."

He called on KKMB to team up with established corporations to develop the tourist complex at Tasik Cini. He also appealed to the professional group within his community to heed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to those who have made it in life to "give something back" to society.

(END)