

Taib Takes Opposition State Assemblyman To Task For Wrong Facts On Iban Workers
Bernama
November 23, 2011

KUCHING, Nov 23 (Bernama) -- Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud Wednesday took to task an opposition member of the Sarawak Legislative Assembly for providing ridiculous figures of Iban workers migrating to the peninsula and accusing the government of importing lowly-paid foreigners.

He said Wong Ho Leng (DAP-Bukit Assek) needed to prove in the next sitting his claims during his debate that there were some 100,000 Ibans or one-seventh of the total 700,000 population in the state who were working elsewhere as this would have drained the labour supply.

Taib, who is also Finance Minister said in his winding-up speech on the second reading of the Supply (2012) Bill, 2011 that it was pure imagination on the part of Wong for making such an exaggerated statement after the latter sought to seek a clarification on whether any strategies were being implemented by the government to entice the large number of semi-skilled Dayaks working in Johor and Klang Valley to come back.

While Sarawak had created more jobs, especially to fill the industrial requirement in the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (Score), than exporting local talents out, Taib said, the mobility of Sarawakians around the world was a good sign that they were capable of quick adaptation in the modern world.

"Our goal is to create as many good jobs as possible for our people so that Sarawakians do not have to leave the state just to earn a living, if they do not want to," he said, adding that however the phenomenon was a natural privilege of an open economy.

Many Sarawakians, who were trained overseas, had also seen another way of living which they might initially find refreshing and wish to try while some longed to be back home but could not because their focus was on establishing financial independence, he said.

Taib said a manpower study conducted by the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) recently concluded that 58,200 new jobs would be generated under the Score initiative by 2015 or 11,600 new jobs annually, including 620 at professional level, 1,700 (semi-professional), 700 (support group) and 8,600 (general workers).

On the Sarawak economic perspective, he said the state's main objective was to ensure that its economy continued to grow at a decent pace to generate sufficient opportunities for business and the general public.

He said the steady growth would initially come from a steady stream of government spending and projects before the government could depend increasingly on private investments from outside and within the country.

In raising the income level of the local community across the board, he said, the state needed to focus on a paradigm shift in its economic development strategy, which could only be achieved by a significant injection of local and foreign investments.

He said Score was tailored-made for the Sarawak situation - a home grown initiative - that took advantage of reasonably priced energy from hydro and other resources to attract world class industries and build industrial clusters, which it was now able to do for the first time.

With energy, industrial and manpower development as the three main thrusts, he said, Sarawakians should take advantage of opportunities now being made available through Score to make things happen, especially a better spot for themselves and their families under the vast Sarawak sun.

"With the world population having reached seven billion, there is a battle for resources and the people of Sarawak should not be sitting and waiting for things to happen," he said, adding that each one of those in the government must also do their little part to facilitate that need to change and advance with the time.

Sarawak is now undergoing a significant transition, from being an essentially a rural-based economy with some manufacturing activities to the three major levels of development, he said.

---BERNAMA

Copyright © 2011 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=629318>