

Celebrating unity in diversity

New Straits Times

August 27, 2012

By Roy Goh

KOTA KINABALU: Unity and harmony prevails in Sabah because it has been the way of life for the people in the state.

With more than 30 ethnic groups in the state, unity has been the main thrust in putting Sabah on the right track towards peace, progress and prosperity.

A strong advocate of the people's determination in preserving unity is Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, who has played a key role in bringing the state closer as its chief executive.

Federation of Hokkien Association of Sabah and Labuan president Datuk t.C. Goh says continued support from the state government speaks volumes of Musa's efforts in strengthening unity in the state.

"I am all for stronger unity in the country and in Sabah. We should be thankful to have a leader who has played a leading role in uniting the people," opines Goh, who is also the deputy president of the Federation of Chinese Associations of Sabah.

"Grants allocated to the Chinese community for education, culture, religious bodies, sports and welfare have been consistent and reflective of the government's stance on how important unity is to the people, state and country." Goh says Sabah is also fortunate to have people who realise and observe the importance of racial and religious tolerance despite their diverse backgrounds.

"The unity and strong government leadership have led to the unprecedented development of Sabah and its economy." Since Musa took office, the state government has disbursed some RM30 million yearly to over 500 organisations, comprising independent Chinese and mission schools, Buddhist and Sikh temples and churches in the state.

The Federal Government, meanwhile, has allocated RM112 million for 429 government schools, mission schools, Chinese schools and government-aided religious schools in Sabah under a special stimulus package this year.

The recipients are 283 government schools, which received RM95.9 million; 70 Chinese schools (RM10.8 million); 74 mission schools (RM3.7 million); and, two government-aided religious schools (RM1.5 million).

The funds are part of the RM900 million stimulus package for schools nationwide.

Of these, RM500 million is for government schools while the rest was for Chinese, Tamil, mission and government-aided religious schools.

Malaysia Foundation trustee Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye recently spoke of Sabah as a practical and visible example of unity in diversity.

"People of diverse ethnic groups are able to live, learn, work and play together in the spirit of 1Malaysia in Sabah. This scenario has long existed in the state.

"However, c o n t i n u o u s efforts must be made by all to strengthen r a c i a l h a r -
mony and religious tolerance at every level of our society.

"in the days ahead, the creation and sustenance of national unity must be given the
highest priority for unity is vital to ensure the continued growth of Malaysia as a secure,
peaceful, progressive and united nation."

Copyright © 2012 The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad.

Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/celebrating-unity-in-diversity-1.129825>