

Pilot project for Borneo libraries to share resources

by Sharon Ling

KUCHING – Nine organisations from Sarawak, Sabah, Brunei and Kalimantan have come together in a collaborative project to identify and share their resources on Borneo, leading towards the publication of a Borneo bibliography and the digitisation of selected materials.

Dubbed K@Borneo, the project is participated by the Sarawak State Library, the Sarawak Museum Department, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), the Sabah State Library, the Sabah Foundation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Tanjungpura, Pontianak (Untan), Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), and the Brunei Museums Department.

They signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the collaboration at the Sarawak State Library here yesterday, witnessed by Assistant Minister in the Chief Minister's Office Haji Bolhassan Di.

Rashidah Bolhassan, the acting CEO of the Sarawak State Library, said K@Borneo was significant in that it would enable the libraries in Borneo to compile and share their collection of materials on Borneo which other libraries might not have.

"Why is it so important to do this? Initially, when we started on our Sarawakiana trail to source materials on Sarawak, we



MILESTONE...The signatories of the 'K@Borneo' posing for a group photo after the MoU signing ceremony. From left are the acting CEO of Pustaka Negeri Sarawak Rashidah Bolhassan, Rector of Tanjungpura University, Pontianak Ir. Hjh. Purnamawati, Director of Sarawak Museum Department Sanib Said, Vice Chancellor of UNIMAS Prof. Dr. Yusof Hadi, Chairman of Pustaka Negeri Sarawak Tan Sri Datuk Amar Hamid Bugo, Assistant Minister in the Chief Minister's Office Bolhassan Hj. Di, Representative of Sabah Foundation Noradida Mohd Drus, Representative of Sabah State Library Gregory Joitol, and Nellie Datuk Paduka Hj. Sunny from University Brunei Darussalam. PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN CHAN.

found that a lot of other libraries outside, especially in the Western world, have collections on our state," she said adding that libraries in Borneo might have their own collections on Borneo but the resources remained unshared.

Speaking to *Tribune* after the MoU ceremony, Rashidah said it was the first time libraries in Borneo had forged cooperation on a regional level, following in the footsteps of libraries elsewhere who had set up consortiums for sharing resources.

The project, which is partially funded by the Japan Foundation's Asia Centre Grant Programme,

began last year and is expected to be completed by the end of 2004.

It is divided into three main phases - identification, selection and compilation of Borneo materials; publication of a Borneo bibliography; and digitisation of rare, unique, deteriorating or non-print materials.

The participating organisations are currently in the process of compiling data on their Borneo materials, an exercise which is expected to be completed by next month.

This will be followed by the publication of a first bibliography from the project which will cover published monographs on

Borneo available in Borneo's libraries.

The project participants hope to launch the bibliography during the Congress of Southeast Asia Librarians (Consal) to be held in Brunei in May next year, Rashidah said, adding that the first volume would likely be followed by subsequent bibliographies.

"We plan to compile more bibliographies covering other materials, such as non-print materials and unpublished research and studies, so this is not going to be the first and only bibliography as there are just tonnes of material available," she said.

She also said the bibli-

ography would provide a one-stop centre for researchers and students to find information on Borneo.

"It will tell you where particular materials are available and that will be your first point of reference. Later, when we have enough funds, we will host it on a website and researchers or students will be able to find out a library nearest to them having the information they want."

She said the information base could be expanded outside of Borneo to create two points of access that would lead to connectivity between researchers and writers in Borneo.