

Geothermal power plant will put M'sia on world map – Max

KOTA KINABALU: Malaysia's first geothermal power plant project in Apas Kiri in Tawau with a capacity of 36MW not only will reinforce generation capacity in the east coast but also put Malaysia on the world map of geothermal power production.

The project is being undertaken by Tawau Green Energy Sdn Bhd (TGE) and to successfully achieve these goals, TGE needs to work and partner with various stakeholders and parties including government agencies, academic institutions, technology providers, civil societies, among others.

Minister of Power, Green Technology and Water Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili (pictured) said this at the signing of Memoranda of Understanding between TGE and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), between TGE and Atlas Copco as well as the launch of the Renewable Energy Association of Sabah (REASabah) here last night.



"This three-in-one event marks an important milestone not only in Sabah's energy development plan but also the nation's energy policy development," he said.

He said as part of the establishment of TGE's geothermal power plant project in Apas Kiri, a Geothermal Resource Centre GRC in Tawau was proposed to be established as an effort to develop expertise,

skills and human resource in this field that is new for Malaysia.

"I am aware that TGE had signed a similar MoU with the University of Auckland on February 24 this year. I was also present to witness the signing ceremony in Auckland together with other delegates representing the federal and state government agencies, Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB)," he said.

Dr Maximus added that with the signing of this memorandum, UMS would be able to assist TGE in facilitating the proposed GRC in Tawau.

UMS is a well-established local university with strengths in the field of geology as well as research and development.

The objectives of establishing the GRC include bringing together stakeholders and specialists in the geothermal en-

ergy industry to provide capacity building for the budding Malaysian geothermal industry; providing specific training and short course programmes in the areas of applied geoscience, geothermal drilling, power plant design and operations; and providing a platform for local universities to collaborate with foreign institutions in the field of geothermal energy.

Atlas Copco, he said, was a leading provider for binary geothermal technology for power plants and as such the close partnership between TGE and Atlas Copco would allow technical collaboration in the introduction of new renewable energy generation technologies in Malaysia to optimise its geothermal resource potentials.

"Our local Sabahan and Malaysian engineers and scientists will also benefit greatly from technology transfer programmes," he added.

Dr Maximus also said the formation of REASabah was most timely, given the variety and abundance of Renewable Energy (RE) sources in Sabah.

Sabah is already a leader in grid-connected RE power plants such as from oil palm biomass, biogas and small hydro and very soon geothermal sources.

There are five RE power plants with a total installed capacity of 36.5 MW operating in Sabah and the biomass plants account for 30MW while the remaining 6.5MW comes from mini hydro.

The total RE potential in the state is projected to exceed 2700 MW in total if fully exploited.

Most of the capacity is expected to come from hydro resources at 1,930MW, geothermal at 405MW and biomass at 370MW.

"I believe this association

will provide Sabah RE industry players a platform to exchange ideas and network constructively to strengthen the industry.

"And, I am also certain the contributions from the association members, who include, RE plant developers and operators, RE equipment and technology suppliers, academics, NGOs and utilities will reinforce the industry in Sabah," Dr Maximus said.

Among those present last night were Datuk Dr Joachim Gunsalam, the Assistant Minister of Local Government and Housing, Sustainable Energy Authority Malaysia (SEDA) chairman Datuk Dr Yee Moh Chai, UMS deputy vice-chancellor (research & development) Professor Dr. Shahril Yusof, managing director or TGE Ramzi Raad, Atlas Copco president Peter Wagner and REASabah pro-tem chairman Datuk Peter Lajumin.