

# RM355 mln to develop rural areas via modern farming

December 30, 2018, Sunday at 12:18 AM Samuel Aubrey, reporters@theborneopost.com



Uggah (third left) receives the 'Beting Maru Overall Development Master Plan' from Razaili, as others look on.

**KUCHING:** The Ministry of Modernisation of Agriculture, Native Land and Regional Development is allocating a budget of RM355 million for the development of rural areas through modern farming next year.

"This will include bringing in more or upgrading infrastructure like roads and drainage, as well as setting up food parks and processing and collecting centres.

"The relevant training and planting materials will be provided," said Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas when opening the 'Beting Maru Food Festival 2018' in Beladin yesterday.

Uggah, who is also Minister of Modernisation of Agriculture, Native Land and Regional Development, said Sarawak would link up with reputed anchor companies to buy products from the farmers and market them to the outside world.

"It is the Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg's vision for Sarawak to be a net exporter of food by 2030," he added.

On another matter, Uggah said plans were afoot to further improve the quality of 'gula apong' (nipah palm sugar) produced in Beting Maru.

He said these would include mechanising the process to accentuate the product's quality and nutritive values, and giving it suitable packaging before rebranding it as 'Nipah Honey' in liquid form.

He added that the Sarawak government had allocated RM2 million for the setting-up of an industrial area to 'modernise' the production of gula apong, which is still being traditionally processed.

"Gula apong is among products of great commercial potential in the area. It is reputed to

be the best in the nation, and diabetics-friendly.

“With the modern input, we can raise the standard and boost its demands and sales nationwide,” he said.

Later, he announced a grant of RM1 million as next year’s subsidy for farmers and breeders in Beting Maru constituency.

Uggah, who is also minister in-charge of Unit for Other Religions (Unifor), also announced a grant of RM500,000 for a chapel in Mutun; and RM200,00 each for the chapels in Mutun Asal and Beluh, in Beladin.

He called upon the people to continue giving their fullest support to Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS)-led government under Abang Johari for his ‘Sarawak First’ policy and also unrelenting pursuit of Sarawak’s rights under Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63).

Uggah also called upon them to continue supporting Beting Maru assemblyman Razaili Gapor whom he described as ‘a visionary, committed and non-confrontational leader’.

“The fact that he (Razaili) came up with a master plan for Beting Maru’s overall development, speaks volumes about his leadership quality,” he said.

Razaili, who spoke earlier, said the area is currently developing large-scale coconut and pineapple cultivations.

“We aspire to become the largest producer in Sarawak of these two crops in the coming years. We also spire to develop our gula apong industry and the ‘kelulut’ (stingless bee) honey production.

“We certainly need and appreciate assistance and guidance from YB Uggah’s ministry,” he said, adding that incursion of seawater into the planting sites remains among the area’s biggest problems.