

Telang Usan Hotel
Kuching, Sarawak.

Date: 15 September 2009

Greetings and Good morning.

My comrades and I are very happy to meet with you all in this historic meeting. For us, this is the first time we have come to Kuching city.

For everyone's information, we are representatives of all the people of the Penan villages of Peleiran-Murum River, Belaga District, Sarawak. The names of our villages are Long Wat, Long Luar, Long Tangau, Long Menapa, Long Singu, Long Malim dan Long Uba which contains a population of over 1000 people.

We have not come to Kuching city for pleasure but [have come] full of concern, anxiety and tears. We bring (you) the deep pain in the hearts of all the people of the Penan villages on the Peleiran river because of the heavy concerns with how our lives have been since the start of the construction of the Murum dam project.

If this Murum dam continues, the water from the dam will flood our traditional lands including our villages, properties, gardens, paddy fields and farmlands, fruit trees, graves etc. The forest areas and resources that support our lives will be destroyed. We will be forced to move to an area that we do not know and is not compatible with our life conditions.

We Penan people also want to achieve progress like other communities in Malaysia, especially Sarawak. For many years, we have asked the government for basic development projects like schools, clinics, clean pipe water, farms etc. We do not ask for hydro electric dams like Murum dam.

We realise that dam development projects that have been constructed in Sarawak have failed to improve the lives of local communities. For example, the villagers of the Batang Ai and Bakun Asap-Koyan Rural Growth Schemes face many problems, hardships and narrowness in their daily lives that have not been solved by the government.

We also witness how the lives of the Penan Talun community of Long Belangan in the Bakun Asap-Koyan Rural Growth Scheme have gotten worse compared to before they were forced to resettle because of the Bakun hydroelectric dam.

Us Penan from Peleiran-Murum river would also not be exempted from the problems and impacts of the dam project if the government still insists on continuing the Murum dam development.

We are deeply concerned about the effects and impacts of Murum dam on our future societies and generations.

Because of this, we ask the Government to stop the Murum hydroelectric dam project to safeguard our communities' lives now and in the future.

Thank you.

Statement read by:

Sui Along, representative of Village Head Along Ju and six other Penan villages in Peleiran Murum, Belaga District, Sarawak.