

Calls for better drainage, sewerage system

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KUCHING: The anticipated increase of population in the urban areas due to rural-urban shift calls for the need of a proper and effective drainage and sewerage system.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Adenan Satem said the urban population had swollen over the years because people realised that more opportunities were available in urban areas to uplift their standard of living.

He believed that about 30 per cent of Sarawak's total population of 2.5 million was living in urban areas and with it, the need to have proper drainage and sewerage system.

"The figure can increase over the years, and with it, even more problems," he said at the 3rd International Conference on Urban Drainage a gala dinner at Riverside Hotel here Tuesday.

Adenan cited a recent case when flash flood hit the city and

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Tan Sri Datuk Amar Adenan Satem, Chief Minister

people vented their anger on the authorities.

"With the unpredictable weather pattern due to climatic change that we have, the time has come for a change in managing the storm water runoff," he said.

He added that with the state's annual rainfall of between 3.5m and 4.6m, the degree of excess runoff generated from developed areas apart from silts coming from bare land areas must be carefully dealt with.

The chief minister also said the state government had promoted sustainable development, and looking seriously the impacts of human activities on the environment through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

He was glad to note that the conference was held here to complement the Department

of Drainage and Irrigation's effort in the state, and to visit the three projects - Bau Town Flood Mitigation, Kuching City Centralised Sewerage System and Sungai Sarawak Regulation Scheme.

The conference, which ends tomorrow (Sept 12) is being attended by about 500 experts in the field of urban and rural drainage from across the globe. The conference is a platform to share ideas and expertise.

Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Datuk Seri Dr James Dawos, DID director-general Ahmad Husaini Sulaiman, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's deputy secretary-general Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohd Nor and state DID director Wong Siu Hieng were among those present at the dinner.



Adenan (centre) receives a souvenir from Ahmad as Dawos looks on. — Photo by Chimon Upon