

Govt to build dam in Kaiduan

KOTA KINABALU: The government will pursue its plan to build a dam in Kaiduan, Papar.

Despite a lot of opposition since the idea was first mooted in 2008, Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan yesterday said it must be built within the next three years.

He said there was an urgent need for the dam as more than a million people living in the surrounding areas, such as Papar and Tuaran, would depend on it for clean water supply.

Pairin, who is also infrastructure development minister, said this during the state-level World Water Day Conference and Exhibition here, where he represented Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman.

He said according to government studies, the country would face a water shortage crisis by 2030 and, according to reports by the United Nations, there would be a 40 per cent shortfall in global water supply by 2050.

"If we don't have this dam, we will

be in trouble by 2030. Sabah needs to increase water storage. As the population increases, consumption will go up and the need to build more dams will escalate.

"It is the most important dam and the state government has taken all aspects into account, including the resettlement of villagers along the river," he said.

The Kaiduan Dam will be built over Sungai Papar which flows down from the Crocker Range in Penampang to the Papar district.

About 10 traditional villages along the upper reaches of the river may be affected if the plan was to be implemented.

Pairin said his ministry and the district offices would continue to engage with villagers and opposers to the project and make them realise the importance and benefits of the dam in the long run.

"The Babagon Dam (in Penampang) is enough for now, and although we have water sources in Telibong (Tuaran), we will need an additional source by 2030," he said,

adding that the state government had put in place the necessary plans.

Musa, in his keynote address delivered by Pairin, said Sabah saw an increase in water demand from 863 million litres per day in 2005 to 994 million litres per day in 2010, in tandem with population growth.

He said treated water supply to domestic sectors now covered 100 per cent of urban areas in Sabah, while rural areas received 75 per cent of treated water supply, with gravity water adding eight per cent.

"The government is committed to increasing the output of rice to about 60 per cent of Sabah's needs to reduce the importation of this item.

"To make this happen, water comes into the equation as padi planting, like many other agricultural pursuits, requires this resource.

"The management of water resources for both domestic and agriculture needs must be reviewed, with emphasis on demand management, on top of supply and distribution management."