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## Timely RIVERS '07 Conference

"Today's river management is more about managing people rather than the environment..." said Deputy Chief Minister, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Alfred Jabu ak Numpang who officiated the **2nd International Conference on Managing Rivers in the 21st Century: Solutions Towards Sustainable Rivers Basin (RIVERS '07)**.

*Rivers' 07*, organised by Universiti Sains Malaysia's River Engineering and Urban Drainage Research Centre (REDAC) together with Sarawak Rivers Board discussed topics such as Integrated River Basin Management, Watershed Land Use Planning and Management, Flood Forecasting and Flood Risk Management/Mitigation, Sustainable Drainage System, Inland Water Transport and Water Quality Treatment among others. Sarawak Development Institute assisted the main organizers in ensuring the success of RIVERS '07.

Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Alfred Jabu ak Numpang, in his keynote speech highlighted that sources of river pollution in Sarawak were mainly from solid wastes, industrial discharges and silts emanating from various human activities. Land development involving clearing of terrestrial vegetation and removal

of top soil for construction, preparation of agricultural lands and plantations were also culprits to the increase in suspended solid contents in rivers.

Datuk Paduka Ir. Keizrul Abdullah, Director General of Department of Drainage and Irrigation, presented a keynote address entitled *Bringing Nature Back to Our Rivers* where he called for holistic efforts and planning in managing the river basins throughout the country.

According to Prof. Nor Azazi Zakaria, Director of USM REDAC, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) is the way forward to address the three major water problems in the country - flash floods, water scarcity and water pollution. Pilot projects on the viability of Bio-Ecological Drainage Systems (Bioecods) have been carried out successfully at USM's engineering

campus in collaboration with Department of Drainage and Irrigation. The other keynote speakers were Prof. R.A. Falconer from Cardiff University, United Kingdom on *Modeling Extreme Flood Levels, Inundation Extent and Bacterial Levels in Riverine Basins*; and Prof. Jorg Imberger from University of Western Australia on *Water Quality Management*.

After experiencing a series of devastating floods especially in Peninsular Malaysia, the conference provided a timely platform to discuss the much needed solution to these issues. The loss of properties, lives and opportunities are increasingly too costly for everyone to bear.

About 150 participants from 19 countries attended the conference where the latest technology on water management was also on display.

**Sparkles of Growing Minds** and **Shaping a Culture of Thinkers** are a compilation of winning newspaper articles and short stories from the AZAM-PETRONAS Best Feature Writing Awards and Short Stories 2001 - 2004. These compilation highlights the ideas, thoughts, and information on development with the main aim of becoming a source of reference for future development planners, media practitioners and the academe. These books are for sale through ASK Centre, AZAM. For further enquiries, please contact En Iskanda Mohd Muar at 082 - 411 799 / [is@azam.org.my](mailto:is@azam.org.my)

