



OPENING ADDRESS

BY

**YANG BERTHORMAT DATO SRI HAJI JULAIHI BIN HAJI NARAWI
MINISTER FOR UTILITY AND TELECOMMUNICATION SARAWAK**

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE

OFFICIAL PRESS CONFERENCE

FOR THE

**9TH INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL ECONOMY CONFERENCE
SARAWAK (IDECS) 2026**

9 SEPTEMBER 2026

**PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM, MINISTRY OF UTILITY AND
TELECOMMUNICATION (MUT)**

SALUTATIONS

Datu Hii Chang Kee,

Deputy Sarawak Secretary (Operation), Premier's Department Sarawak, representing the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Utility and Telecommunication Sarawak (MUT)

Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Morshidi,

Chairman, Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation;

Dato Ir. Ts. Sudarnoto Osman,

Chief Executive Officer, Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation;

Tan Sri Dr. Suhaila Jaffar,

Deputy General Manager, Sarawak Multimedia Authority;

Mr. Andrew Chien Kai Bing,

Chief Operating Officer, Sarawak Information Systems, representing the Chief Executive Officer of SAINS;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good afternoon and welcome.

INTRODUCTION

1. Thank you for joining us as we mark another milestone in Sarawak's journey towards becoming a regional powerhouse in the digital, green, and innovation-led economy.
2. Technologies that were experimental a few years ago now dictate global competitiveness. Artificial Intelligence is leading this shift, transforming governance, industry, and research.
3. In Malaysia, our trajectory has also been rapid — progressing from establishing the [National AI Office](#) in December 2024 to institutionalising AI Malaysia in July 2026, launching a National AI Action Plan, and our first locally built large language model [ILMU](#).
4. Crucially, AI cannot advance in isolation. Computing infrastructure, reliable green energy, research capability and talent are increasingly becoming part of the same economic and industrial strategy.

THE REGIONAL DIRECTION

5. We see the same shift across our region. The conclusion of negotiations on the [ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement \(DEFA\)](#) is set to support a [US\\$2 trillion digital economy by 2030](#). This creates larger markets, but it also means greater competition for capital, technology and talent.

HOSTED BY



ORGANISED BY



6. Malaysia is positioning itself directly for this shift. Under the **Malaysia Digital Action Plan 2030**, the Federal Government aims for Malaysia to become an [AI Nation and technology producer](#), targeting a [30% digital economy contribution to national GDP and 500,000 high-value jobs](#).
7. For our Sarawak, the opportunity now is to connect the strengths we already have in energy, infrastructure, research capability and talent with these higher-value industries, and make sure more of that growth can be created here.

WHERE SARAWAK STANDS

8. Sarawak has made deliberate investments over the years to build the foundations of a digital economy — [expanding our internet coverage to 94.5% of populated areas, pushing 5G coverage past 63% on track for 80% this year, and securing a 60% renewable energy mix](#).
9. These investments are consistent with the direction we have set under PCDS 2030 and the Sarawak Digital Economy Blueprint 2030, where digital infrastructure, innovation, talent and sustainable growth are all important parts of Sarawak's wider economic transformation.
10. We are now entering the next phase, where the measure of success is not how much technology we deploy, but the economic value we create from it.

HOSTED BY



ORGANISED BY



11. Having built these foundations, the focus now turns to commercial value. This means moving research into intellectual property, leveraging infrastructure to attract private capital, and empowering Sarawakians to design, build, and export our own technologies.

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF IDECS26

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. It is with this purpose that I am pleased to formally announce that the **9th International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak, or IDECS26**, will take place from 5 to 6 October 2026 at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, under the theme **"Scaling Innovation Ecosystems for a Borderless Economy: Earth, Orbit and Beyond."**
13. IDECS26 is jointly organised by the **Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA) and Sarawak Information Systems (SAINS)**. I wish to thank all three organising agencies, our partners UMobile, Huawei, SMD Semiconductor, Malaysia East Asia Satellite (MEASAT), Reach Ten Communication, SACOFA, the Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC), and the Sarawak agencies represented on the IDECS26 working committee for the collective effort behind this year's conference.
14. The theme reflects where Sarawak is today and where we want to go next. We have built different parts of our digital and innovation ecosystem. Now, we must connect them more effectively so that

HOSTED BY



ORGANISED BY



research can reach industry, innovators can reach investors and markets, and individual successes can contribute to broader economic growth.

15. We must also look beyond Sarawak. As ASEAN becomes more integrated, the flow must work both ways. We want to continue bringing global knowledge, technology and investment into Sarawak, while creating stronger pathways for Sarawakian companies, ideas, research and talent to reach Malaysia, ASEAN and wider international markets.
16. Our ambitions also extend from Earth, to Orbit and Beyond — leveraging satellite connectivity, Earth observation, and geospatial tech for immediate ground impact, while positioning Sarawak at the technological frontier.

WHAT DELEGATES CAN EXPECT AT IDECS26

17. This year, the conference will place particular emphasis on **Artificial Intelligence, Digital Talent Development, Semiconductor Innovation** while expanding into new areas for IDECS26, **the Emerging Space Economy**.
18. The Conference will go beyond where these technologies are heading to examine what it takes to build real capability around them, attract investment and turn that capability into economic value.
19. Delegates will experience these discussions across five main conference tracks: **The Future, Future Cities, Startup Village,**

HOSTED BY



ORGANISED BY



SHE-TECH Asia Forum, and the Centre of Excellence for Digital Economy (CoE).

20. We are also pleased to welcome five notable international speakers to IDECS26: **Dr Soichi Noguchi**, former Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) astronaut and Two-Time Guinness World Record Holder, **Professor Jason Pomeroy**, Founding Principal, Pomeroy Studio and CISL Fellow, **Dr Catherine Ball**, Scientific Futurist, Bestselling Author and Australian Business Woman of the Year, **Dr Nici Sweaney**, Founder, AI Her Way and Ethical AI Strategist, and **De Kai**, Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and Distinguished Research Scholar at ICSI Berkeley.
21. Their perspectives span space, responsible AI and research commercialisation, reflecting the breadth of conversations we are bringing together at IDECS26.
22. We are also preparing for IDECS26 at a much larger scale, targeting more than **20,000 attendees from over 30 countries, more than 100 speakers and over 100 exhibitions.**
23. The purpose is to bring global expertise, investment, partnership and markets into Sarawak, while creating pathways for our local talent and businesses to scale regionally and globally.

INVITATION AND CLOSING

Fellow Sarawakians,

24. Digitalisation will be critical in raising our productivity across industries, strengthen our ability to compete for higher-value investment and create new sources of economic growth.
25. We want the investments already made in Sarawak to crowd in private capital, create industries with greater value here, and give Sarawakian companies and talent a stronger position in regional and global markets.
26. IDECS26 is where we bring those ambitions together with the partners who can help us take them to scale.
27. I would once again like to thank SDEC, SMA, SAINS, and all the agencies represented in the IDECS26 Working Committee for their collective efforts in bringing this ninth edition of IDECS to life. My appreciation also goes to our valued partners, including U Mobile, Huawei, SMD Semiconductor, MEASAT, Reach Ten, SACOFA, the Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC), and many others whose support has made IDECS26 possible.
28. Over the coming weeks, we will be sharing more of the international speakers, industry leaders, partners and programme highlights that will come together at IDECS26.

HOSTED BY



ORGANISED BY



29. Together, let us turn innovation into greater value for Sarawak and into opportunities that reach beyond our borders.
30. Thank you, and I look forward to welcoming you all to IDECS26.

HOSTED BY



ORGANISED BY

