

**PERUTUSAN TAHUN BARU CINA 2018  
YANG AMAT BERHORMAT  
DATUK AMAR ABANG HAJI ABDUL RAHMAN ZOHARI  
BIN TUN DATUK ABANG HAJI OPENG  
KETUA MENTERI SARAWAK**

1. Salam sejahtera dan Gong Xi Fa Cai kepada seluruh Anak Sarawak daripada kaum Cina di mana sahaja saudara dan saudari berada ketika menyambut perayaan Tahun Baru Cina pada tahun ini.
2. I wish all our Chinese friends a happy Lunar New Year and may the Year of the Dog according to the Chinese Zodiac bring prosperity and good health to all of us.

Dear friends,

3. The weather has not been so kind to us of late but I believe this will not dampen the spirit of our Chinese friends to welcome the Lunar New Year. Village houses, longhouses, schools, roads and shops were badly inundated by flood water. We have tried our best to extend assistance to the people affected and I do hope as the flood water have receded our Chinese friends who are affected have returned to normal life to usher in the New Year.
4. Often, on the evening of Chinese New Year Eve is an occasion for Chinese families to gather for an annual reunion dinner. Members of families from near and far would sit around and enjoy the food, the conversation and the chatter in trying to make up for the time they have not been together. It is an occasion for our Chinese friends to strengthen their family bond and look forward to a brighter year ahead.

Dear friends,

5. We are proud that Sarawak is a place where people can understand and respect each other and be able to live in a society where unity is of paramount importance to our common good and overall well-being. We have heard or seen a lot things happening in other parts of the country that only serves to divide and segregate the society along racial and religious lines. Some of those are happenings, like different washing machines for people with different beliefs, are plain ridiculous and not healthy at all for a diverse society like ours. Thanks God, this has not happen in Sarawak and we pray Sarawakians will always live alongside each other as friends and willing to share and not dominate.

Dear friends,

6. My predecessor, the late Pehin Sri Adenan, have taken a lot of steps that had eased the burden of the *rakyat*. When I came to office about a year ago, I decided to take a different approach not because I want to be different. I might not get popular with it but I decided to implement policies to strengthen the state

economy as I believe we need to transform economically and strong in our economic front. Economic policies are sometimes not easy to understand and moreover may not yield immediate results for people to appreciate.

7. Sarawak needs to be economically strong and be able to generate more revenue to finance its development towards the year 2030. No doubt we have yearly allocations from the Federal Government but considering the size of Sarawak it is more often than not insufficient to fund programmes like development of infrastructure and utilities. For this reason we have put in place various economic initiatives to invigorate our state economy with a view to turn Sarawak into a digital economy within the next two decades.
8. Our GDP contribution to the national economy is the third largest because of our oil and gas but our median monthly household income of about RM4,000 is still comparatively quite low. Our current average GDP growth at 4 % annually is not enough to propel us to become a developed and high income economy by then. Experts said we need to average at 6 % per annum if we are to reach the target. This is the priority of the government now while not forgetting the need to provide our rural people with better roads, schools and other amenities to upgrade the quality of life in our rural areas.
9. With the setting up of the Development Bank of Sarawak (DBOS), we have a new financial model to finance strategic projects to expedite development in certain areas and increase domestic spending in order to generate more economic activities so that domestic consumption can be increased. We have a strong reserve and a bit of this reserve should be invested instead of just keeping them in local banks. If we do not invest our reserves in viable and strategic economic projects we would lose the opportunities to use it to develop our economy. DBOS and investment in strategic projects are expected to generate some returns and this would provide us with the means to pay back to the state reserves what we have taken out and injected into DBOS as its paid-up capital.
10. With the setting up of the Sarawak oil and gas company (PETROS), we expect to be able to be an active player in the oil and gas industry alongside PETRONAS within two years. Besides the setting up of the methanol plant in Bintulu we expect to see more investment involving Petros and investors in the oil downstream sector. We have already signed a term sheet with Petronas to buy a 10 % stake in LNG Train 9 in Bintulu and we are hoping to increase our stake in LNG 3 from the current 10 % to 25%. I am confident that contrary to scepticism of some, PETROS will not just be another Production Sharing Contract company (PSC) but one that will operate alongside PETRONAS and play an active part in the downstream activities of the oil and gas industry in Sarawak. We have appointed the CEO and will launch it very soon. We are actively taking part in the oil and gas industries within the realm of our written law and the constitution.
11. The state Government is also embarking on a programme to establish a state water grid with RM 1 billion of our state fund being set aside to implement the first phase from Batang Ai to Tanjong Manis. We have so much water in our dams that should be put to good use to supply water to our people in rural and coastal areas. This first phase will take off the ground within these two years but the

remaining phases that would cover the whole state will take a much longer time to materialise. I envisage that some RM6 to RM7 billion would be spent to set up the state-wide water grid which we can recoup from the revenue water. The spending would also have the effect of injecting more money into our local economy. We want this to be a holistic programme to solve our water supply problems which is sometimes ironic because we have so much water yet some of our *rakyat* are without water especially in the coastal areas.

12. I am confident that with a strong public spending and our Digital Economy Initiatives within the next five to ten years we will be able to open up our economy and generate more consumption that should boost the growth of our local economy in order to be able to achieve a growth of 6 % annually towards the year 2030.
13. Our Chinese friends, being major players in Sarawak's commerce and industry have a big role to play in the current government's effort to strengthen the State's economy. All these while our Chinese business community have always been a major contributor to commerce, trade and industry in Sarawak. I trust that our Chinese friends will continue to support the government's effort to strengthen our economic position with their resources, domestic and international influence and networking. We are willing to listen to the needs of our business communities and take steps to increase the ease of doing business in Sarawak like doing away with red tapes and unnecessary procedures.
14. A more robust domestic economy should be good news to our Chinese friends who are involved in many kinds of businesses and services. I am sure that our business community together with other communities will make the most the opportunities, particularly in the services, construction, housing, tourism and food sectors.

Dear friends,

15. Sarawak is a land of diversity. Not only our nature is rich and diverse but the culture, ways of life and beliefs of our people is also diverse. But we are always free to practice our culture, tradition, and religion. We celebrate and find strength in our diversity, find common ground in our differences. That is Sarawak that we know today – united and cohesive, that has been an example for the rest of the country to emulate.
16. Saya menyeru kepada saudara dan saudari yang bukan daripada keturunan Cina supaya meluangkan masa untuk berkunjung ke rumah-rumah terbuka rakan-rakan kita daripada kaum Cina dalam usaha berterusan untuk memperkukuhkan perpaduan dalam kalangan kita yang pelbagai agama, bangsa dan budaya. Biarlah Sarawak terus menjadi contoh kepada semangat perpaduan kaum dan agama yang tulen bagi seluruh negara.
17. Akhir kata, sekali lagi saya dan keluarga mengucapkan Selamat Tahun Baru Cina 2018 dan bergembiralah di samping keluarga dan rakan-rakan.
18. Terima kasih. Gong Xi Fa Cai.