



# SARAWAK BAHÁ'Í NEWSLETTER

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## Message from the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sarawak

To the Bahá'ís of Sarawak

Dearly loved Friends,

In this feast, we take great pleasure and pride to inform the friends of the honour and privilege that the beloved Universal House of Justice has conferred upon the followers of the Blessed Beauty in this *Land of Hornbills* of ours.

In a letter dated 17 July 2011 to selected National Spiritual Assemblies, the Supreme Body informed us that our Spiritual Assembly is one of the *"45 now being invited to participate in the international financial collaboration programme for the new Five Year Plan"*.

As elaborated in the said letter, this programme is the instrument adopted by the Universal House of Justice to provide a large number of national communities with valuable financial assistance from their sister communities across the Bahá'í world. During the recently concluded Five Year Plan, 42 national

bodies had participated in this programme in raising fund to meet a variety of needs, such as, acquisition of land and buildings for local Bahá'í centers and future Temple sites, etc., in places where financial assistance was required.

Beyond meeting the financial needs, through this programme, *"the bonds of unity between geographically distant national communities have been strengthened and the worldwide solidarity of the believers enhanced"*.

We would not be surprised if the first reaction of the friends on being told that we are one of these selected 45 National Spiritual Assemblies would be one of disbelief. We were equally surprised because the present status of our national fund seems inadequate for us to participate in this programme.

However, upon closer reflection on the content of the letter and having duly consulted among ourselves, we have every reason to

believe that our being selected to participate in this programme is not done on ad hoc basis but rather based on the great confidence our beloved Supreme Body has on the followers of Baha'u'llah in Sarawak. In the said letter, we are told that we have been selected *"because the House of Justice believes you are in a position to assist other national communities which have not been endowed materially to the same extent."*

Dear friends, there is no doubt that friends here are more *endowed materially* than in the past. Yes, we are materially richer, and it behooves us to be spiritually richer, too, and live our lives according to Baha'u'llah's exhortation to be *"generous in prosperity"*.

It is your Assembly's firm belief that friends can contribute far more than they have been contributing to the national fund. It is with this belief, and the full confidence that the community of the

# CONFERENCE ON HUQÚQU'LLÁH, MIRI SARAWAK

27 - 28 August 2011

Miri was a good choice as the Conference venue as it is not only easily accessible for friends in Sarawak but also for friends from Brunei and Sabah. The total number of friends who participated was 66 including 2 from Brunei and 6 from Sabah. Thus the localities represented were very wide including from Sarawak - Kuching, Seratok, Bintulu, Miri, Kanowit, Niah, Bakong, Serian, Mukah, from Sabah – Lahad Datu, Sandakan, Kota Marudu, Penampang, Putatan, Keningau and from Brunei - Bandar Sri Begawan.

## 27 August 2011

The Conference started at 9am with Devotional and brief introduction of oneself by each participant present. This was followed by a talk on **The Purpose of Our Lives** given by Deputy Trustee Dr John Fozdar. The next session was **Travels of Abdul-Baha and Teaching the Faith** presented by Mr Paramasivan who showed the friends many photographs depicting Abdul-Baha's travel to the West.

Dr John Fozdar then spoke on **Obedience to the Laws of Baha'u'llah**. During the talks by Dr John Fozdar, translation into Malay/Iban was done for the greater benefit of the friends.

Both the afternoon sessions were dedicated to studying some lessons from the **12 Lessons on Huqúqu'lláh** compiled by Dr Firaydoun Javaheri. The friends were divided into 4 groups to ensure that each group is not too large, thereby enabling richer interaction by the friends. There was one English speaking group and three Malay/Iban speaking groups. In this way the friends were able to study, share and learn more effectively in their preferred language.

In the evening, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Miri hosted a Community Gathering at the Miri Baha'i Centre. About 100 friends including youth and children were present and Dr John Fozdar spoke on **The Sacred Law of Huqúqu'lláh** with translation given in Iban by Mr Alexson Buja Keling. The friends were able to enjoy great fellowship meeting up with friends both old and new.

Greatest Name in Sarawak can do it, that we have replied to the Universal House of Justice to accept the invitation and to pledge our participation in this international financial collaboration programme for the whole duration of our current Five Year Plan.

With the invitation accepted and the pledge made, we hope the friends will ponder deeply in their hearts the following passage from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian:

*"There should be a continual flow of funds to the national treasury of the National Spiritual Assembly, if that body wishes to properly administer the manifold and ever-increasing activities of the Faith. Every Bahá'í, no matter how poor, must realize what a grave responsibility he has to shoulder in this connection, and should have confidence that his spiritual progress as a believer in the World Order of Baha'u'llah will largely depend upon the measure in which he proves, in deeds, his readiness to support materially the divine institutions of His Faith."*

Yes, all of us, "no matter how poor", can prove, "in deeds", our readiness to "support materially" the Cause of God. On that note, we wish you a fruitful consultation on how your community can contribute to this programme and the monthly amount you can pledge as you all gather together to celebrate the Feast of Mashīyyat.

With loving greetings,  
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sarawak



*Friends attending the conference on Huqúqu'lláh held in Miri City*

### **28 August 2011**

The morning session was presented by Mr Tay Yang Huang on **Some Elements in the Calculation of Huqúqu'lláh**. Ms Marilyn Lee was on hand to translate Mr Tay's talk into Iban. The use of Colour Visual Display to conceptualize the Rights of God, as well as a comprehensive spreadsheet template to key in income, needful expenses and value of 19 mithqals of gold was very helpful for the friends to understand how they can determine the number of units of 19 mithqals of gold and the amount they have to pay to purify their possessions as well as showing the balance (less than 19 mithqals of gold and not yet purified) to be carried forward to the following year's calculation.

In the afternoon, the friends were again divided into 4 workshop groups for consultation on **Role of Representatives and Educators in Educating the Community on the Sacred Law of Huqúqu'lláh**. A spokesperson for each group was then invited to share the many suggestions given.

Mr Paramasivan then shared some study materials on Huqúqu'lláh available both in print and electronic media available for the education of the friends. The participants were also given some materials and encouraged to educate other friends in their communities and neighbouring communities.

The Conference was joyously concluded at 5pm with many friends confident and pleased that their understanding of the Sacred Law of Huqúqu'lláh has been further enhanced by the holding of this historic Huqúqu'lláh Conference in Miri.

Reported by Mr. Aaron Young of Sabah

## THE FOZDARS' FAMILY REUNION

The Fozdar's family gathered in Kuching for the joyous event to celebrate Kamal's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They were being kindly entertained to a potluck dinner by the communities of Kuching City North and South. After that, they all moved to Perth, Australia where they were joined by Zena and Jyoti Munsiff of UK and Cape Town.

While they were there, Dr. John was invited by Dr. Jimmy Seow to join him in a fireside at the Baha'i Centre of Learning. They attended the Nineteen Day Feast of Kamal with the Canning Vale community.

Molly Wong and Soheil Chinniah and family of Malaysia were also present. They also visited Mino Fozdar in Bunbury to participate in a fireside which they have regularly in their home.



*KUCHING, 23 July 2011: Kuching Baha'i friends and the Fozdars at a potluck dinner held at the Kuching Baha'i Centre. The dinner was held to welcome all the children (except the youngest one, Roy who arrived together with his wife a day later) and their spouses and grandchildren of Dr. John Fozdar and Grete Fozdar, both of whom came to pioneer in Sarawak in the 1960s and have remained here ever since. Their children were all born in Sarawak and are now residing overseas and all, including their spouses and children, are active members of their respective Baha'i communities. It was a happy occasion for the Kuching Baha'i community to have under one gathering the whole (well, almost) Fozdar family in Kuching.*