KUCHING: Newly-appointed Sarawak Dayak National Union (SDNU) president Tan Sri William Mawan wants all its members to cast aside past problems and political affiliations so that the union can move forward.

In urging members not to see politics as a division, Mawan, who is also Minister of Social Development, stressed that unity must prevail and past issues should never be allowed to become distractions.

"Now is the time to uphold the spirit of working together and move forward. Past problems must be solved as we highlight a united front. Enhance unity so that our political divide will be a thing of the past. It takes time to achieve complete solidarity. However, if we harness our strength through solidarity, we can go very far," he said in his presidential acceptance speech after the announcement of SDNU 2012-2015 council members during its triennial general assembly at Penview Hotel here yesterday.

Mawan also spoke of the need for SDNU to reach out to its Bidayuh and Orang Ulu counterparts through Dayak Bidayuh National Union (DBNA) and Orang-Ulu National Association.

"The image of SDNU as an exclusive platform for one particular group should be eradicated as it (platform) needed to be shared by all."

Mawan, who succeeded Mengga Mikui as SDNU president unopposed, also highlighted the need for SDNU branches to be re-organised or revived so that it could spread its programmes further and recruit more members.

"All branches should build up their capacity and reach out to all communities. The organisation (SDNU) must be mobilised so that SDNU can justify itself to the world that we are relevant to the community."

He reminded veteran members to always give priority to SDNU when discharging their responsibilities.

"Those who do not have the capability to handle given tasks should give way to new and younger members who can perform them."

Meanwhile, Kapit MP Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi, who won unopposed as deputy president, said members should learn to ‘agree to disagree’ and be receptive to the opinions of others in order to nurture the spirit of solidarity.

To the new council members, he urged them not to turn their appointments into their own personal property.

“We are working for the people as we are chosen by them. Now we must work towards strengthening the unity of the Dayak community as a whole.”

Forest Department senior officer Anthony Banyan and former senator Dato Sri Empiang Jabu retained their posts as vice president I and II respectively.

The newly created vice president III post went to SDNU Youth wing chief Edward Awan, who was a committee member in the 2010-2012 line-up.

Lawyer Kilat Berjak is the new secretary-general, while his assistant is Kuching Resident senior accounts clerk Jackson Ding Jaraw.

Entrepreneur Ganchai Jinta is the new publicity officer replacing Dr Dusit Jaul. All supreme council members won unopposed to their respective posts.

The committee members are Sibu-based entrepreneur Steven Rom who garnered 74 votes, lawyer Chambai Lindong (72), Uitm lecturer Dr Gluma Saban (70), Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (Sadia) Kuching branch chairman Datuk Dr Anthony Nait (68), SDNU former assistant treasurer-general Augustine Merikan (67), former SDNU internal auditor Robin Jimbai (65) and Gita Sidok of sister-organisation Sarakuup Inda Dayak Sarawak (SIDS) Sarikai branch (62).