Not all depts recognize Sabah Bugis as bumis

KOTA KINABALU: Persatuan Komuniti Bugis Sabah (PKBS) president Datuk Osman Jamal yesterday expressed his wish to see unity in the Bugis community in Sabah.

"We must be united in the true sense of the word otherwise we will fall, that is why among my balaju (aims) is to unite all the Bugis community associations that are registered in Sabah," he said at PKBS annual general meeting here.

Osman said that for the sake of the community and future generation, he is ready to sit down with the leaders of other Bugis associations to discuss issues affecting them and find ways to resolve them.

One of the issues affecting the Bugis community now is that they are not always recognized as Bumiputera in Sabah, he said.

Earlier, one of the delegates raised the problem faced by Bugis contractors in obtaining a PUKONSA licence, as he claimed that the community is not recognized as Bumiputera by the state government.

Osman said the Bugis community is recognized as Bumiputera as there are some contractors from the community who have obtained the PUKONSA licence.

"It is just a matter of explaining to the officer in charge about our status. Like in the case of some Bugis children not being accepted into UTM because they are said to be non-bumiputera... maybe it is not government policy but interpretation of the officer responsible, and they need clarification on the matter," he said.

"I will discuss with the relevant ministries about the Anak Negeri status and I have discussed the matter with Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, and he was shocked that there are department or ministries not in line with other departments with regard to the Bugis community's Bumiputera status," he added.

According to Osman, documentation about the history of the Bugis community in Sabah was only done in 2007 and after the documentation, they can now way that they are Bumiputera as it has been proven that the community existed in Tawau since 1881.

Osman assured the delegates that the Bugis community's Bumiputera status will be given.

"I cannot do it alone, if all of you work together with me towards achieving the halatuju, we will be able to get what we have been asking for.

"But don't blame the government because the issuance of the Anak Negeri certificate was stopped due to irresponsible quarters abusing the system," he said.

"That's why we were not issued with the native certificate resulting in our status being dubious," he said, adding that according to law, Bugis born in Sabah are natives.

In his opening speech earlier, Osman told the delegates that the ground breaking ceremony for the 'Dewan Paodo' project to build an arts and cultural centre in Tawau for the Bugis community is expected to be conducted next month.

With the centre, the world will know more about the Bugis culture, he said.

Osman said PKBS will be working with Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to develop the Bugis culture and all this is being done as part of efforts to strengthen the community's identity.

"I will step down as PKBS president after the Dewan Paodo is completed in 2013 as I want to make way for the younger generation to lead the association to greater heights," he said, adding that he will still continue to play an active role as he will be setting up a board of advisers for the association.

At the meeting yesterday, Osman launched PKBS' Putera Puteri wings, Auto Club, website and magazine.

Among the issues raised by the delegates was the need to appoint representatives from the Bugis community as Ketua Anak Negeri, and not only as Wakil Ketua Anak Negeri.

They also called for more opportunities to work in the civil service and opportunity to own land so that they can build houses as the Bugis community.

One of delegates urged the PKBS leadership to invite Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to officiate at the association's next annual general meeting.