



PRESS RELEASE
2nd Borneo Economic Forum
Shaping the Future of Borneo
7–8 October 2026 | Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

The Borneo Economic Community (BEC), in partnership with the Government of Sarawak and the BIMP-EAGA Sarawak Association (BESA), convened the 2nd Borneo Economic Forum in Kuching, Sarawak, on 7–8 October 2026, under the theme “Shaping the Future of Borneo.”

The forum brought together businesses, policymakers, and community stakeholders from across Borneo to explore future-oriented opportunities for economic development and regional cooperation. With more than 250 participants, the two-day forum featured opening keynotes and panel discussions, thematic roundtables, a gala dinner, and B2B matching sessions. It attracted delegations and representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Kalimantan, Sabah, and Sarawak, reflecting the growing interest in strengthening economic connectivity across Borneo.

In his opening remarks, Co-Chair and Founder of Borneo Economic Community (BEC) highlighted that the forum was established to explore how Borneo can become more connected, more competitive, more sustainable, and more inclusive for its people. He emphasized the importance of bringing together stakeholders across borders to translate shared aspirations into practical cooperation and initiatives.

H.E. Basuki Hadimuljono, Head of the Nusantara Capital Authority, emphasized Indonesia’s vision to develop Nusantara as a major driver of broader economic growth. By strengthening the potential of green tourism and educational experiences in local areas and surrounding cities, Nusantara is envisioned to generate economic benefits that extend beyond its immediate area. Basuki also invited stakeholders from the investment and business sectors to collaborate, supported by measures such as fiscal incentives and ease of doing business. Guided by the principles of sustainability and connectivity, Nusantara is ready to foster greater synergies across Borneo.

Meanwhile, Datin Seri Paduka Hajah Tutiatty binti Haji Abdul Wahab, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Brunei Darussalam also highlight Brunei Darussalam’s vision for Borneo, with a focus on strengthening regional connectivity, trade, investment, and economic diversification.

Meanwhile, Indonesia emphasized regional development as a key driver of economic transformation and shared prosperity. Kalimantan, envisioned as the Nusantara Economic Superhub, will promote higher-value industries, sustainable down streaming, clean energy, stronger connectivity, and regional value chains to create quality jobs and broaden economic opportunities across Borneo.

H.E. Rachmat Pambudy, Minister of National Development Planning of Indonesia, stressed that the ultimate measure of development is the prosperity and well-being of the people. Through stronger cooperation among Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, including through BIMP-EAGA, the Borneo Growth Corridor can advance inclusive, green, and resilient growth while ensuring that the benefits of greater trade, investment, and connectivity are widely shared across communities.



The forum was formally inaugurated by The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr.) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, Premier of Sarawak, who underscored Sarawak's strategic priorities in strengthening regional connectivity, trade, and investment across Borneo, in line with Sarawak's vision to serve as a sub-regional economic engine for ASEAN.

The opening panel brought together Dato Jonathan Chai Voon Tok, President of the Sarawak Business Federation (SBF); Daniel Leong, Acting CEO of the Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB); and Sofyan Djalil, CEO of the Indonesian Business Council (IBC) shared their perspectives on how Borneo can move forward in capturing emerging and future economic opportunities.

The discussion explored the importance of positioning Borneo for the next phase of economic development by leveraging its natural resources, connectivity, industries, and human capital, while ensuring that growth remains inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people of Borneo.

The substantive discussions were then organized around three thematic roundtables:

- Borneo Grid: Powering ASEAN's Growth, focusing on strengthening power connectivity across Borneo, expanding renewable energy development, and exploring how integrated energy infrastructure can support industrial growth and contribute to the broader ASEAN Power Grid agenda.
- Digital Borneo: Powering the New Economy, exploring opportunities to strengthen digital connectivity, develop digital and AI capabilities, and ensure that businesses and communities across Borneo are positioned to benefit from technological transformation.
- Towards a Unified Borneo Integrated Industrial Hubs, examining opportunities to strengthen trade and investment through more integrated industrial development, leveraging the complementary strengths, resources, and capabilities of different parts of Borneo.

The three roundtables generated several key initiatives, areas of alignment, and potential follow-up actions, providing a foundation for continued cooperation among governments, businesses, and other stakeholders across Borneo.

The forum also reaffirmed the importance of strengthening and repositioning the Borneo Economic Community (BEC) as a collective voice for businesses across Borneo. As a business-led and inclusive platform, BEC aims to bring together the complementary strengths of business chambers, companies, industry associations, and community stakeholders across Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam.

The forum also acknowledged the recent wildfires affecting parts of Borneo and expressed concern for the communities directly impacted. Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected, particularly those whose lives and livelihoods have been disrupted. The forum also emphasized the importance of stronger cooperation among stakeholders across Borneo to address the immediate situation and work together to reduce the risk and impact of similar incidents in the future.

Overall, the 2nd Borneo Economic Forum reaffirmed the importance of Borneo as an emerging sub-regional growth corridor within ASEAN and demonstrated the potential of stronger cross-border collaboration to translate the island's diverse economic potential into greater connectivity, competitiveness, sustainability, and shared prosperity.



This press release has been prepared by the Borneo Economic Community (BEC) to provide an overview of the 2nd Borneo Economic Forum (BEF).

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