

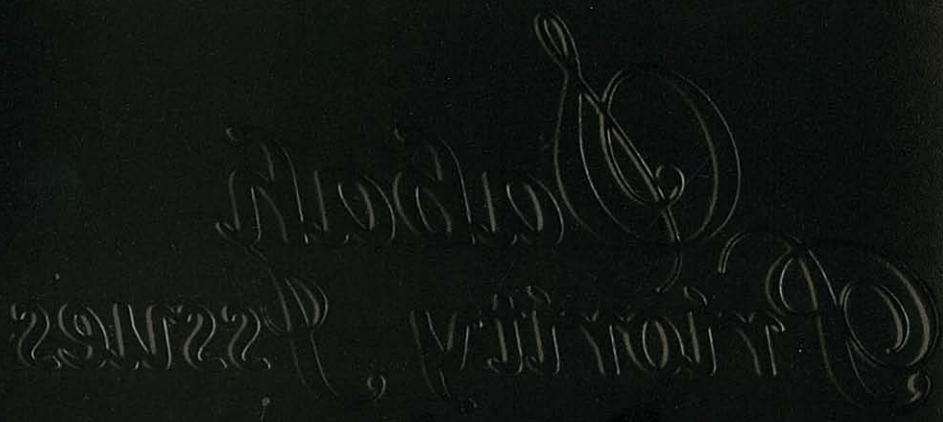
Front cover photograph

The photograph was taken in Kg Maliau, Banggi Island. The children are from Balabak community, the least known minority group in Sabah. With approximately 2000 people, they settled in only two villages on Banggi Island.

Back cover photograph

This photograph was captured in an almost abandoned Bajau Ubiyan village near a small town known as Karakit, an administrative centre of Banggi Island.

**Both photographs are courtesy of Paul Porodong.*



Sabah Priority Issues

SETTING THE COURSE FOR CHANGE

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Editor

Mustafa Yusoff

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Editors

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FOREWORD

The proposals and analyses that readers would find here are the thoughts of individuals who have spent their careers studying the issues, and in more than one instance, lived those issues. There have been many publications on issues confounding Sabah produced by government agencies, non-governmental organisations, interested individuals, and naturally the academics.

So, one may ponder, 'Why is there a need for another publication? How this can be any different?'. This book - *'Sabah Priority Issues, Setting the Course for Change'* (SPISCC) - offers a more insightful overview on Sabah, which was outlined in *'Towards 2057, Setting the National Agenda'* (*Towards 2057 SNA*). *Towards 2057 SNA* was launched in March 2009, and has since served as one of the national 'principal blueprints' under the administration of the sixth Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Abd Razak. The formulation of 1Malaysia concept, for instance, is partially based on this document. SPISCC was initiated, with the aim, to re-emphasise these identified priority issues so that their significance is fully understood and acknowledged; and ultimately their relevance could be well embedded within the national context.


SPISCC strongly argues that although the processes and patterns (of these identified issues) are unique to Sabah, the dimensions (where they operate) are never isolated from the national socio-economic-political system. The real underlying nature of the issues, in terms of causes and implications, go beyond its physical location - Borneo. There are still sentiments and beliefs that some of the state's nightmares are somewhat the result of the federal government's dreams. 'Sharing and caring' still seems an elusive concept when it comes to state-federal relationship.

This book explores the dimensions and outlooks of the issues; and models the inter-connection of each one of them. When strategising a way forward, we should perhaps align the starting point along the right line of thinking: *these are local problems that need both local and national actions*. It is important to note that this book is neither a comprehensive story of Sabah's dilemma, nor a blueprint for policy-making. **SPISCC** simply draws the big picture of various priority issues in Sabah.

Attention to detail is only possible, when we can clearly see the big picture.

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