

## **Let us go back to the root causes of flooding in Sibul**

In the light of some of the Sibul people cannot accept or doubt the proposal that the Department has put up for them, I wish to explain further to the people of Sibul. In case of doubt, we can always go back to basic fundamental.

### **The flooding in Sibul can be classified into two categories:**

#### 1. Regional flooding:

Is when a river over flows its banks and floods its hinterland due to heavy and prolong rainfall in its upper catchments. The situation worsens when this coincides with king tide. The worse regional flooding in Sibul occurred in 1963, lasting for a few days. This is a once in 50 years flood occurrence.

The structural measures to mitigate the regional flooding include:

- A) construction of dams at the upper catchments,
- B) diversion channel or flood bypass,
- C) bunding along river banks, and
- D) dredging and straightening of river channel.

All the above options had been studied in depth for the flood mitigation measures in Sibul. For argument purpose, if the river channel of Batang Rajang can be dredged to the original profile of 1963, Sibul is still subjected to regional flood as it had happened before. Furthermore, it will be worse than 1963 event since the runoff from the upper catchments has increased due to development activities.

#### 2. Flash floods or localized flooding;

Flash flooding is the result of heavy downpour in a localized area and the inadequate drainage system to discharge the water. The situation can be aggravated by occurrences of king tide and siltation of the outlet channel.

The siltation of Batang Rajang has resulted in more frequent flash floods in Sibü. The duration of flash floods tends to be longer than usual. Proposal to dredge Batang Rajang may partially and temporarily alleviate the flash flood.

The proposed flood mitigation measure for Sibü is a proven concept and had been successfully implemented in different parts of the world including Malaysia. This proposal can alleviate both regional and flash flooding in Sibü.

## **Conclusion**

The Department of Irrigation and Drainage, Sarawak has never denied that dredging of critically silted up sections of Batang Rajang will improve the navigation of the river. It may also partially reduce the flash flooding problem in Sibü but for how long? We also maintain that dredging of Batang Rajang is not a holistic solution to resolve the flooding in Sibü.

In view of the keen interest and concerns expressed by the people of Sibü, I have decided to post the concept of flood mitigation proposal at [www.did.sarawak.gov.my](http://www.did.sarawak.gov.my) soon and we are prepared to be reviewed by the experts in the world. If you have any question or doubt regarding the proposal, you are welcome to pose your questions and we will try to answer or clear your doubt.

For the sake of our future generations, let us work together in finding the best technical solution to mitigate the flooding problem in Sibü.

**Issued by Ir, Wong Siu Hieng**

**Director of Irrigation and Drainage, Sarawak.**

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