Kuching, 22nd July 2019 - In conjunction with the Sarawak Day, the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Kuching in collaboration with Sarawak Multimedia Authority and Old Kuching SMART Heritage has successfully held the Sarawak River Art Competition 2019 themed ‘Our River, Our Life’.

A total of 30 paintings, 10 poems and 6 sculptures were shortlisted from amongst the entries and a prize presentation was also held on the same day at the Kuching Waterfront where the former State Secretary, present day deputy chairman of Old Kuching SMART Heritage (OKSHe) Tan Sri Datuk Amar Mohamad Morshidi Abdul Ghani, officiated. Also present were YBhg. Datuk Haji Abang Wahap bin Haji Abang Julai, Kuching North City Commission Mayor, Prof Ir. Dr. Al- Khalid Othman, the Deputy Chief Scientist & Chief Advisor for Digital Economy Sarawak State Government, Associate Prof. Dr Yeong Siew Wei, Chairperson of RCE Kuching and the Sarawak River Art Competition Chairperson, Miss Francesca Enchang.

Champions for each category received a voucher for a one night stay in a UCSI Hotel Superior Room including breakfast for two people, a cash prize of RM500, and a UCSI Bursary of RM10,000 along with a certificate.

The RCE Kuching Vice Chairperson, Mdm. Mukvinder explained that the art competition was aimed at gathering unique perspectives that local communities have on their rivers and their sustainability and how they can express themselves in various art forms. She elaborated by saying, “We would like to promote the goals of SDG 6 which is Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 14; that is, Life Below Water. We want to empower our locals to understand what they can do to contribute to each of these global goals”.

In view of the belief that the young ones should also be encouraged and aware of taking care of the rivers, a colouring contest was also held on the same day, especially for children below 12 years of age.

Besides the art competition, the Sarawak River Board and the Natural Resources and Environment Board also supported the event by each giving an awareness talk to the students and public on keeping the rivers clean.

In September 2018, the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Kuching was set up to support transformative education for translating the United Nations’ global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the local context. RCE Kuching’s main focus is on the Sarawak River Kiri, as it is the main water source for Kuching. The centre will continue to work together with its key partners, which include various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as WormingUp, JCI Kuching, schools, WWF-Malaysia, the Natural Resources and Environment Board, the Sarawak Rivers Board, Sarawak Biodiversity Centre, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), G.A.M.E.S., Kuching Chef Association, Trienekens and communities along the river such as Kampung Semadang. Moving forward together with these stakeholders, RCE Kuching wants to be able to provide a framework for strategic thinking and action on sustainability, thus creating tangible improvements in our communities. RCE Kuching also wants to empower locals and youth to be agents of change as they make sustainable choices for themselves and their communities.

It is our hope that RCE Kuching’s future programmes will continue to improve the society’s awareness of the importance of river cleanliness, imparting education for sustainable development into the hearts of the people of Kuching and beyond thereby fulfilling many SDGs goals.

Prepared by :

Francesca Enchang

Organizing Chairperson

Sarawak River Art Competition 2019