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S'wak closer to producing anti-HIV and cancer drugs

MIRI: Two researches carried out by the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) on drugs obtained from local plant species to fight Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and cancer were now in their final stages, said Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr George Chan (pic).

He said the anti-HIV drug, obtained from Calanolide which is contained in the latex of Bintangor or Calophyllum tree, was now in the clinical trial stage that, among others, would test its side-effects before the drug could be available commercially.

"The tests would still take sometime to be completed and would be carried out in collaboration with foreign researchers," he told reporters after launching the official website and publicity campaign of the

Borneo Research Council (BRC) Conference 2010, here, Saturday.



Curtin University of Technology Sarawak and BRC, an international organisation of eminent scholars engaged in Borneo-related research, would jointly organise the biennial international conference.

On the anti-cancer drug, Silvestrol, Dr Chan said two local scientists from SBC were sent to the United States to collaborate with several other foreign experts at the National Cancer Institute there to carry out intensive studies.

Speaking at the launching ceremony earlier, Dr Chan said the success of developing the two drugs reflected the huge bio-diversity potentials of the plants available in Sarawak.— Bernama