



Dr Kamaruzaman (centre) receiving a souvenir from Dr Mahmud Sudin.

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Nutrient depletion in soils a real threat: UMS V-C

Neil Chan

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon said the decline in soil fertility is a serious problem facing the world today.

"Nutrient depletion in soils is a real threat to food production and the issue of food security is a worry to us all, Malaysia not excluded."

He said this at the launching of the Soils 2011 Conference at the 1Borneo Grand Ballroom, here, Tuesday.

"Maintaining soil fertility is a key prerequisite to sustaining plantation and crop productivity, especially in the tropics, so soil fertility and nutrient management aims to achieve maximum advantage and enhanced efficiency while maintaining good environmental stewardship."

Kamaruzaman also said there was a need for hard data on soil changes and nutrient management strategies in order to improve the understanding of agricultural systems and to design sustainable cropping systems.

"Control of soil degradation, restoring abandoned land for agriculture and forestry and improving productivity needs our urgent attention," he said.

Kamaruzaman said the Soils 2011 Conference, which is an annual event of the Malaysian Soil Science Society (MSSS) with the theme "Soil Fertility and Plantation Productivity", will give more insight on the challenges and gaps that need to be overcome.

"It will contain presentation of results by scores of workers on soils and related fields, in the form of oral and posters encompassing aspects of soil fertility, soil management, agriculture, plantation and the environment, organic farming and waste utilisation for sustaining our soils," he said.

The conference was organised by UMS in collaboration with the School of International Tropical Forestry in collaboration with MSSS and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry Department in Sabah.

Also present at the seminar was UMS Soils 2011 Conference Organising Committee Chairman Assoc. Prof. Dr Mahmud Sudin, President of the Malaysian Soil Science Society Dr Shahrakbah Yacob and Dean of the UMS School of International Tropical Forestry and also Vice President of the Malaysian Soil Science Society (Sabah Chapter) Dr Normah Awang Besar @ Raffle.