

UMS takes part in seminar on reshaping tourism

TBP 04.12.2021 P.05

KOTA KINABALU: University Malaysia Sabah's Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, National Institute of Technology, Fukushima College, Japan, Adamson University, Philippines and Jose Rizal University, Philippines, organised the Sustainability Seminar 2021 with the theme of Reshaping Tourism for Better Future.

The seminar was aimed to provide academic discourse on sustainability issues in this region that resonates with global concerns.

This year, the seminar focused on starting fresh for the tourism industry, which has been impacted the most by the pandemic.

Despite the encouraging news about vaccines, the recovery of the tourism industry is slow and expected to take at least another year.

Destinations that rely heavily on tourism like Kota Kinabalu and Manila are particularly struggling. Many countries are now developing plans to build a more resilient tourism industry following the Covid-

19. More than 200 participants from Malaysia, China, Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines representing 10 higher institutions and organisations took part in the seminar.

A keynote speaker and seven invited speakers talked about their research on how tourism could recover from the pandemic in sustainable way based on their country's perspective.

Associate Professor Dr Awangku Hassanah Bahar Pengiran Bagul, head of Tourism Management Program and chairman of the seminar,

pointed out that the Covid-19 global health crisis is an opportunity to rethink and to reshape tourism.

One example, which is "overtourism" had been a concern in many destinations prior to the pandemic. Now is the moment for those destinations to redesign and adjust tourism policies and management, including greater diversification, more innovative products, and the revitalization of rural areas.

"Across the world, people have started to rediscover their own

countries through domestic tourism, and this offers an opportunity to spread the sector's benefits more widely," he said.

The seminar was officiated by Osamu Yamashita, the president of National Institute of Technology, Fukushima College, Japan.

In his officiating speech, Yamashita mentioned that the tourism industry needs urgent action to kickstart its recovery.

"First and foremost, we need to collectively ensure that vaccination is equitably

available across the world. One key concern is that developing countries, many of which are highly dependent on international tourism, are bearing the heaviest negative impacts of the uneven vaccination roll-out".

He added the example of Fukushima disaster in 2011 as an inspiration to recover sustainably.

The seminar was officially closed by the Dean of Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, UMS, Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Md Mansur.