

## SPOR Will Improve Nation's Palm Oil Research Quality

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**WEDNESDAY, 03 JULY** – In line with Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) continuous efforts through its innovative, relevant and sustainable concept, has set up a Sustainable Palm Oil Research (SPOR) Unit in an effort to steer its EcoCampus concept to correspond with the researches which is environment-friendly in nature.

In officiating the Unit, Deputy Chief Minister cum Minister of Industrial Development, Datuk Raymond Tan Shu Kiah, the nation's revenue from products based on palm oil amounted to RM80.4 billion in 2011 and expected to increase to RM103.9 billion in 2020.

Even with the significant achievement, the palm industry experience many obstacles including efforts to increase the palm oil productivity with the same size of land. This situation is worsening given the number of agricultural land which seems to be declining.

"Contamination in the form of industrial wastes, threats on wildlife, increasing transmission of diseases to the crops are among issues which should be given serious attention by the SPOR Unit," he said.

He added that the government is seriously looking into this industry where it is among the 12 National Key Economic Area (NKEA) listed to increase the nation's economy to that of developed countries by the year 2020.

"My hope is that with the setting up of SPOR, it would be a good platform to extend this research cooperation between UMS and Palm industries in Sabah towards control issues and challenges relating to the palm industries in this state," he added.

UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd Harun Abdullah said the setting up of this unit was UMS' initiatives through the School of Science and Technology (SST) to work together with the palm industries in efforts to increase the research quality relating to palm and the issues of sustainable especially in Sabah and Malaysia in general.

"SPOR is unique because it emphasises on the research principles which are resilient and comprehensive starting from the planting level to the issues of environment," he said.

At the function, SPOR received another two more research funds project from the Malaysian Palm Oil Board amounting to RM13,000 which was presented by the MPOB Deputy Director (Research and Development), Dr. Ahmad Kushairi Din. Also present were Head Librarian UMS, Puan Dayang Rukiah Ag. Amit and SST Dean, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Baba Musta. – *FL*

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