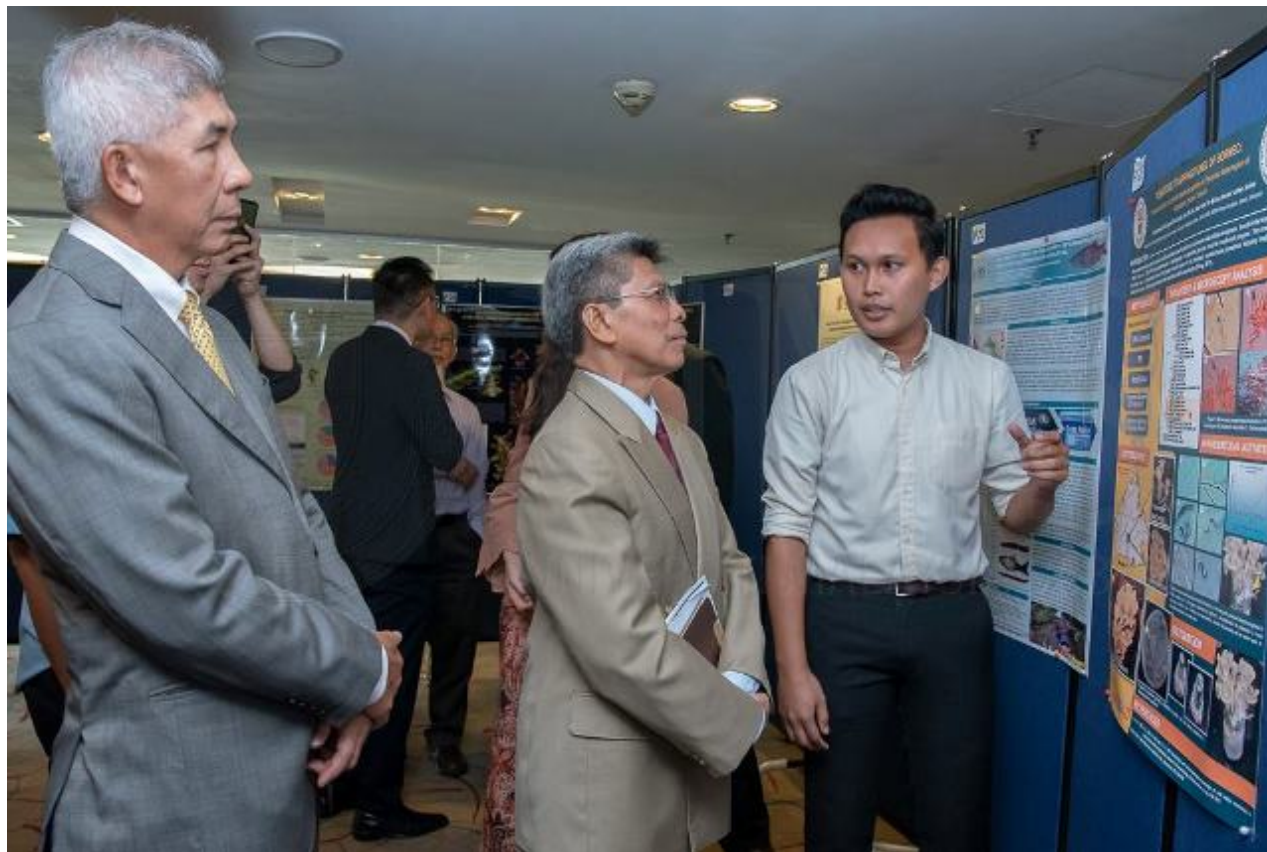


## Borneo Geographic Expedition Seminar 2019 Explore Various Findings

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**WEDNESDAY, 17 APRIL** - Institute of Tropical Biology and Conservation (IBTP) Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) organised a seminar on Borneo Geographic Expedition 2019 : Kangkawat Research Station, Imbak Canyon Conservation Area (ICCA), yesterday.

The objective of the seminar was to share information and to document the findings obtained during the expedition held on September 28 until October 9<sup>th</sup> last year in collaboration with Yayasan Sabah Group.

Among the area studied included flora and fauna diversity, forest ecology, water quality, hydrology, geology and components of social science and eco-tourism.

Kangkawat, which part of the ICCA is a forest dominated by dipterocarp forests and is rich in plant diversity and known as a gene bank.

In his speech, Chairman of UMS Board of Directors, Datuk K.Y Mustafa said UMS and Yayasan Sabah, through its Conservation and Environmental Management Division had carried out many collaborative research and educational activities for the past two decades.

“Thus, it is high time to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between these two organisations, just to strengthen the collaborations in research and education and in other areas beneficial to both parties,” he said.

KY Mustafa added UMS will give full support on collaborations with state agencies and our stakeholders.

“UMS has many excellent researchers in various fields, not only in tropical biology but also in social sciences, engineering, medical sciences, arts and heritage and so forth. We are happy to work together with state agencies or any relevant industries to support their goals,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Director of Yayasan Sabah, Datuk Haji Jamalul Kiram Haji Mohd Zakaria said, ICCA is one of the five conservation areas managed by Yayasan Sabah Group, in addition to Danum Valley, Maliau Basin, Silam Coast and Taliwas River. The pharmaceutical and biotechnology potential of ICCA is vast and needed to be explored.

“ICCA is also an important component of the biodiversity corridor, especially the mammal wildlife, connecting the Maliau Basin to the south of the Danum valley to the east. It serves as a water catchment area for longest river system in Sabah, the Kinabatangan River,” he said.

Jamalul also added Yayasan Sabah Group collaborated with Petronas to develop ICCA as a learning centre for local communities in biodiversity conservation as well as gene bank conservation, and exploration of pharmaceutical and biological potentials.

The Imbak Canyon Studies Centre (ICSC) which was recently officiated by the Chief Minister of Sabah cum Chairman of the Yayasan Sabah Board of Trustees, Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Mohd Shafie Haji Apdal on March 26, will be a centre for tropical rainforest research, education and capacity building.

“I encourage students and researchers from local and international universities to utilise this facility to its fullest and carry out research on biodiversity, ecology, physical sciences, nature tourism and other fields that are needed to manage the conservation area effectively. The vast forest of Imbak Canyon could offer researchers a wide research topic from fundamental to applied researches,” he added.

The Borneo Geographic Expedition 2018 is an example of collaborative activity which could support the management plan of ICCA and the data obtained from the two weeks expedition could provide a scientific basis for conservation and management decision by Yayasan Sabah.

There were 49 presentations in the seminar, where 26 were oral presentations whereas the other 23 were poster presentations.