

Daily Express, 15/6/97

UMS, Japanese body embark on joint cooperation

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and the Museum of Nature and Human Activities (MNHAH), of Hyogo in Japan, has embarked on a joint cooperation to increase the rate of acquisition of knowledge on issues pertaining to biodiversity conservation.

The agreement to this effect was signed through a Memorandum of Understanding between UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Abu Hassan Othman and MNHAH Director Dr Masso Kawai at the UMS Likas campus near here, Saturday morning.

Such collaboration, the first of its kind in the country, also include research and development, exchange of staff and students, and education.

It further outlines the following objectives:

- to speed up the establishment of reference collection of Sabah's flora and fauna, Borneo in general, for a proposed biological resources inventory;

- to promote biosystematic and ecological studies of selected flora and fauna;

- standing between scientific communities both at staff and student levels of the two institutions;

- to provide a forum for discussions on issues relating to conservation of biodiversity;

- to provide a bilateral communication between research institutes in Malaysia and Japan aimed at creating better international understanding, and

- to publish research find-

ings by all researchers involved.

The joint undertaking would be through UMS' two research units related to issues of conservation of the tropical ecosystems and its Biological components, namely Tropical Biology and Conservation Research Unit (TBCU) and the Marine Borneo Research Unit (MBRU).

The TBCU deals mainly with terrestrial organisms and habitats while the MBRU involves in marine organisms and habitats.

TBCU has a Borneansis division which will be a collection centre for flora and fauna from Sabah, and Borneo in general. The collection kept at the centre for active research purposes by local and foreign scientists as well as students.

Meanwhile, MNHAH has been in operation since October 1992, aimed at assisting people in appreciating the beauty and dignity of the natural surrounding environment.

As an education and scientific family, it has been contributing to the understanding of how humans are related to nature. it addresses issues pertaining to problems caused by human activities such as pollution, and conservation of flora and fauna.

At the same time, the exhibits would educate people about evolutionary processes, such as speciation and variation.

Most of the exhibits resulted from the active research carried out by the museum scientists with the support of the Himeji Institute of Technology.

