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HOME

# Pak Lah: Exploit country's biodiversity for new wealth

KOTA KINABALU: The country's biodiversity could be exploited to generate new wealth, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday.

"With our biotechnology, we can exploit it to generate new wealth," he told a gathering of 3,500 students from various institutions of higher learning in Sabah at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here.

He said the country's biodiversity could be the source of new income and wealth for the nation, especially for those living in the rural areas.

Abdullah said Malaysia currently possessed a community of local scientists and technologists compared to 20 or 30 years ago where their number was too small to be referred to as a community.

This was due to policies implemented by the government especially in education, he said.

He said Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) had also offered as one of its courses biotechnology, an advance field considered by many as more important than information and communications technology (ICT) in future.

Abdullah also reminded the students not to have inferiority complex but greater confidence in their own ability to excel in their respective fields of studies.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, as a leader, had shown to others that Malaysia was capable of achieving development at par with the developed countries and in fact some visitors and tourists had viewed Malaysia as a developed country because of its sophisticated infrastructural facilities.

Abdullah cited as an example the capability of Malaysian construction companies which had won contract to build roads in other countries.

Petronas also had emerged as one of the respected oil companies in the world, involved in oil exploration not only in this region but



State Finance Minister Datuk Musa Aman (left) chatting with Abdullah (second right) and UMS Vice Chancellor Tan Sri Datuk Prof. Dr. Abu Hassan Othman (right) at UMS yesterday.

also in Sudan, he said.

Later during a question and answer session, Abdullah said no countries in the world could guarantee their undergraduates that there would be jobs waiting for them once they graduated.

He was answering a question from a UMS undergraduate who expressed concern over the high rate of unemployment among graduates.

Abdullah said education was only to help them to find employment while they had to do the thinking and leg work themselves to gain employment.

He said a person might see an old coconut tree as an opportunity to make money by selling walking sticks made from the trunk while another person might see the same coconut tree fit only to be used for making a crossing. — Bernama



Abdullah planting a tree at the UMS grounds to commemorate his visit to the campus.