

KOTA KINABALU: A more structured approach, including the setting up of a specific Government agency, is needed to help commercialise world class Malaysian research products.

In making the call, the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Tan Sri Dr Abu Hassan Othman, said such an agency and the private sector could work in tandem to achieve the desired results.

"The winning research products must be looked at to see which of these are viable for commercialisation rather than allowing each university to go on its own to find the linkages.

"That's why there is a need to find a new mechanism to facilitate the commercialisation of these products," he said after opening an exhibition of the winning research products by UMS researchers at the Geneva 2004 – 32th International Exhibition of Inventions recently.

Dr Abu Hassan said this was because "such culture is new to Malaysia" and hoped it would become a reality in future.

"My own experience is that there have been many times when universities in Malaysia have won many gold in Geneva.

"From what I saw in Geneva there is a real organised

# Structured approach needed to commercialise research products

research catalyst with the industrialists and entrepreneurs who are keen on to explore the commercialisation of these winning products (achieved by Malaysian academic researchers)," he said.

Dr Abu Hassan said the winning products received many inquiries in Geneva but "unfortunately how to move on further because the universities don't have the capabilities."

"That's why a new infrastructure and new institution needs to be in place to focus on the results of the research products.

"For example, in our case we (UMS) won one gold, five silvers and one bronze.

"And from discussions in Geneva, there are three or four of these products, like 'Twist Your Mind Mathematical Game', which can easily be developed for commercialisation provided there is infrastructure and strategic planning to embark on this," he added.

He said this was the biggest



Dr Abu Hassan showing a model of the 'Twist Your Mind Mathematical Game', which won a silver award at the recent Geneva 2004 – 32th International Exhibition of Inventions.

challenge if the universities concerned wanted to see more and more of the indigenous

research products being commercialised.

"This I saw from other

countries like Taiwan, South Korea and France. I think such an approach can be adopted as

far as our winning research products are concerned," he said.

In the recent International Exhibition of Inventions and Innovations in Geneva, Switzerland, UMS received seven awards, including one gold award achieved by Associate Prof Dr Mohamad Abdul Mannan.

Dr Mohamad Abdul Mannan has invented an oil-palm shell hollow block – made from agricultural solid waste – for the construction of load-bearing walls in cheap housing.

On future participation at the exhibition in Geneva, Dr Abu Hassan hoped that the 10-year-old UMS would continue to shine in the international research arena, thus making it one of the most innovative universities in the world.

"We have a few more inventions in store and we hope to fine tune them so that they can really make an impact in the next exhibition in Geneva," he said. – Bernama