

Register local products with high commercial value, potential: MyIPO

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KOTA KINABALU: The Malaysian Intellectual Property Organisation (MyIPO) has identified several local products of Sabah that have high commercial value and the potential to be registered as geographical indications.

These products are the Sabah sekaki banana chips, Tambunan tuhau, Semporna seaweed, Sabah veggie and Kota Belud machetes or parang.

Director General of MyIPO, Datuk Azizan Mohamad Sidin therefore urges that these products and others with potential be registered with the organisation to incur greater profit.

He said this in his speech at a seminar on intellectual property awareness at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here yesterday. The text of his speech was

read by the senior director of MyIPO for design and industrialisation, Mohd Faizuddin Mohd Sharuji.

Azizan said Sabah had a strategic geographical location and blessed with a rich diversity of cultures that had unique products with high potential for commercialisation.

"It can be registered as a geographical indication which identifies an area as its place of origin. Geographical indication plays an important part in marketing because it is an instrument of branding. Furthermore, it has a direct impact on the agro-tourism sector such as the Sabah Tea Plantation which receives local and foreign tourists," he said.

The importance of intellectual property should not be taken lightly because it can be used as an important asset in economic development as well as ensure legal protection to the

owner of the intellectual property.

The owner of an intellectual property will obtain exclusive rights to the product and has the right to take legal action against any party using that product without prior permission.

"It has the same function as a tangible asset in that it can be traded or licensed with high value," said Azizan.

He advises owners therefore to register their products as geographical indications and trademarks to protect from piracy.

"If not registered, these products cannot be protected and anyone can copy or take them out of the state or country quite easily," he added.

MyIPO is conducting outreach programmes in schools, institutions of higher learning, research centres, local authorities and chambers of commerce to raise awareness on the importance of intellectual properties.