

'State Govt must share responsibility in sustaining UMS'

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Board of Directors Chairman Datuk Seri Panglima Abdul Rahman Dahlan has called on the State Government to play a more proactive role in ensuring the university's sustainability, despite public universities being under Federal jurisdiction.

He stressed that more than 60 per cent of UMS students are Sabahans, and financial pressures faced by the university will directly affect them.

"I understand that public universities fall under federal responsibility, but we cannot remain silent when all universities are experiencing financial strain.

"The State Government must step forward to help, at least by creating new income-generating opportunities for UMS," he said during the Karisma Pemikir Madani Kepimpinan Tertinggi Universiti programme here on Thursday.

Among his proposals was to allow UMS to venture into low-risk businesses such as gas distribution, which already has established suppliers and markets, to generate sustainable income without overburdening the government.



Abdul Rahman Dahlan speaking at the the Karisma Pemikir Madani Kepimpinan Tertinggi Universiti programme.

He also suggested allocating a small portion of mega state projects worth RM30 billion to RM40 billion to UMS' subsidiary companies, reducing its reliance on operating funds.

Additionally, Abdul Rahman urged UMS to expand micro-credential and online learning programmes to increase flexibility in admissions and cut the cost of physical infrastructure.

He further highlighted the potential of tapping into corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds from major companies in Sabah, channelling

part of these resources to support UMS' operations and research.

"We are not asking the State Government to take over the Federal Government's responsibility. But we hope there will be a sense of shared ownership.

"This is the university that educates Sabah's people. If UMS is affected, then Sabah's children will also bear the consequences. UMS is a strategic asset of the state that must be defended together for the continuity of knowledge, student well-being, and the future of higher education in Borneo," he added.