

Sabah's inter-ethnic harmony impresses OIC delegates

NST 28.11.2006 P. 14

KOTA KINABALU: The harmonious relationship enjoyed by Sabah's 30 ethnic groups left a deep impression on overseas participants of the recent two-day OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) Human Capital Management Conference.

The director for the centre for Training and Consultancy Services at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Associate Professor Dr Roselina Ahmad Saufi, told the New Sabah Times that many of the delegates felt that Sabah could teach them something, especially in terms of maintaining the racial harmony among the various ethnic groups.

"They felt they could learn something from Sabah's success in resolving their own problems (with inter-ethnic conflict)," she said.

She added that many of them found that the integration of common values among the ethnic groups, intermarriage, respect for the individual's right to religion, loyalty to leaders and openness and acceptance about cultural differences are some of the ingredients to Sabah's interracial and intercultural harmony.

The peaceful co-existence of the difference ethnic races here had such a huge impact that one of the speakers for the event, Malaysia Airlines Academy Director Zulkifly Baharom, proposed for UMS and the OIC secretariat to embark on in-depth research into Sabah's ethno-cultural model and share its unique practices with the rest of the world, she said. —

Jenne Lajjun