

Malaysia to host seminar on Antarctica

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KUALA LUMPUR: More than 100 local and international scientists will share their research findings at the 3rd Malaysian International Seminar on Antarctica (MISA3) to be held from March 21-23, at the Le Meridian, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

The seminar, held in conjunction with the International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2008, is jointly organised by University Malaysia Sabah and the Malaysian Antarctica Research Programme (MARP) of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM), also in collaboration with University Malaya and the Sabah Science and Technology Unit.

The first and second series of the biennial event were held in Kuala Lumpur (2002) and Penang (2004) respectively.

According to ASM's Vice President Datuk Seri Dr Salleh Mohd Noor the theme for MISA3 is "From the Tropics to the Poles" because the poles are an integral component of the complex Earth ecosystem.

Among the activities to be held in conjunction with the Seminar is an Outreach Programme to generate interest on Antarctica among the general public and school children, and a forum on "Understanding the Implications of Rapid

Warming in the Polar Regions to Earth Systems".

Dr Salleh stressed that the involvement of Malaysian scientists in building relationships and sharing benefits in the framework of a coordinated international collaboration would create world class Malaysian research and bring benefits.

He said seven "Expression of Intent" for projects headed by Malaysian scientists have been accepted by the IPY committee, a significant achievement considering that Malaysia is still a novice in Antarctic research.

Dr Salleh noted that this marks a watershed in the history of Malaysian research, an indicator of our progress in science and technology.

It's imperative that Malaysia be involved more intimately with the Antarctic because any effort to accede to the Antarctica Treaty Consultative Party requires Malaysia to be a key player in Antarctic research.

Hence, the involvement of Malaysian scientists in the IPY carries more weight than merely the effort to elevate Malaysian research and scientific capacity as well as capability. - Bernama