



Prof. Dr Mohd Noh (second left) and Jasa (second right) after signing the MoU between UMS and Ko-Nelayan which was witnessed by Rahim (centre).

Set up training centre at UMS, Ministry urged

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin has urged the Agriculture and Food Industry Ministry to consider setting up a 'Stock Enhancement And Capture Fisheries Training Centre' at UMS' Borneo Marine Research Institute.

This would have to work in cooperation with the various agencies of the Ministry.

He said ways and means of increasing the catching efficiency (or technically) catch per unit effort (CPUE) could then be devised so low-income fishermen do not have to burn a lot of fuel and still get a good catch from the sea.

Mohd Noh was speaking at signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between UMS and Sabah Fisheries and Fishermen Development Corporation (Ko-Nelayan) here Friday.

Dr Mohd Noh signed for UMS while Ko-Nelayan was represented by its chairman Datuk Jasa Dtk Hj Rauddah. The MoU would link up UMS' Borneo Marine Research Institute with Ko-Nelayan to develop the fisheries and aquaculture sector towards sustaining seafood resources.

Dr Mohd Noh said such a demand-driven and need-based proposal would be consistent with the UMS vision of serving the community through modern knowledge of science and technology.

"This centre will provide a platform for scientists and the farming community to better appreciate each other's knowledge

and perspectives."

"While UMS promotes modern knowledge, we also recognise the traditional farmers as skilled innovators who have developed methods through trial and error," he said.

He said to begin with, the proposed centre would be a think-tank and would eventually transform into a policy-formulating and training facility by knowledge-based infrastructure and support system for ecologically sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

The proposal combines increasing stock as well as CPUE. It is here that aquaculture can play a major role by supplying high quality seed at lower price for sea ranching.

The technological devices that will be developed at the proposed centre will facilitate breeding in spawning and nursery grounds and design gadgets for increasing the catching efficiency of the augmented population."

According to Dr Mohd Noh, partnership of aquaculture and fisheries scientists with farmers and fishermen was critically important because scientists have knowledge base they have developed, and farmers have the invaluable indigenous experience of field conditions.

He said the two working in isolation cannot deliver what a consolidated effort can deliver.

"For UMS, both nature conservation and biotechnology are frontier areas. We

have a very balanced perspective, and therefore, our aquaculture biotechnology programmes are environmental-friendly while being solution-oriented."

"In this connection, I must emphasise that while the Institute's aquaculture scientists have produced hybrid grouper by intervention of biotechnology, those working simultaneously on marine biology have discovered new species of sharks in the waters of Sabah."

"One species is known to have become locally extinct almost a century ago. This new record is preserved in our resource collection," he said.

Nonetheless, he stressed what was needed were new policies and new initiatives.

"It is sometimes difficult to find solution of contemporary problems by outdated ideas, he said.

The proposed centre was thus a new initiative and is unique in the sense that it is in the nature of a cooperative centre to be run by collective efforts of UMS and State Government agencies and will have a clearly defined mandate for its activities.

For fisheries and aquaculture to grow into sustainable systems of high quality food production, their linkages with the environment must be created and fostered, and serious efforts made for rehabilitation of depleted resources.

"This will change the public perception of fisheries and aquaculture as community welfare activities," Dr Mohd Noh said.