

UMS told to place high priority on developing new generation of biofuels

NST 27.09.2012 2

KOTA KINABALU: The State government wants Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to place high priority on education and research in second generation biofuels, industrial biotechnology and bio-refineries.

“Comprehensive research, development and deployment strategies are necessary in developing a new generation of biofuels that have better yields, commercial viability and greater environmental performance,” said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman.

However, he cautioned that in developing a new generation of biofuels, it must be done in ways that protect the planet and not in ways that create new risks.

In some cases, biofuels are produced in ways that do not deliver greenhouse gas savings or in ways that cause environmental problems to soil, water resources, loss of biodiversity and deforestation.

“Policies on biofuel development must meet objectives on security of supply and climate change. We cannot afford to pursue biofuel policies that shift problems from one sector to another, as this would have devastating long-term impacts, including environmental degradation, and impact on food security when too much focus is given on producing crops for biofuels,” he said in his speech at the First International Workshop on Advances in Biofuels.

The text of his speech was delivered by Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Dr Yee Moh Chai at the Magellan Sutera Harbour Resort here last night.

Musa called for efforts at both international and local levels to ensure sustainable production and consumption to propel the biofuels sector forward.

“This will mean setting up sustainability mechanisms, including globally agreed sustainability criteria, for new and existing markets. Such mechanisms can

be developed through transparent and frank dialogues with partners, and today’s workshop is an important step in contributing towards this effort,” he said.

He expressed confidence that despite the challenges, it is possible to manage biofuel development in ways that create benefits for the planet and people.

“My hope is for this workshop to debate the pros and cons, while sticking to facts and avoiding populist myths. I understand that an International Biofuels Forum is in the pipeline, and Sabah will offer its commitment in seeing this effort through.

“The forum will provide us a platform for pursuing discussions that result from this workshop. In the long run, it should be our aim to learn from experiences and to expand the production of sustainably produced biofuels, apart from adopting appropriate policies for long-term benefit,” he said. – PR