

Focus on biofuel research, Musa tells UMS

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KOTA KINABALU: Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman wants Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to give special focus on education and research on biofuels, to help the state improve its power security and utilisation.

"We need to invest in technologies to improve the production and use of biofuels, and I wish to call on UMS to place a high priority on education and research in these areas," he said in the speech for the opening of the first International Workshop on Advances in Biofuels here last night.

Musa stressed comprehensive research, development and development strategies were necessary in developing a new generation of biofuels that have better yields, commercial viability and greater environmental performance.

He added in order for the biofuels sector to move forward, efforts to ensure sustainable production at both international and local

levels were needed.

This, he said, would mean setting up sustainability mechanism, including globally agreed sustainability criteria for new and existing market, which can be developed through transparent dialogues among stakeholders.

"While biofuels offer an opinion with promises, it also presents many challenges. We must ensure that biofuels are developed in ways that protect our planet, and not in ways that create new risks.

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

"Policies on biofuel development must also 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," he said.

Despite the challenges, Musa said it was possible to manage biofuel development in ways that create benefits, including strengthening energy security by diversifying energy resources.

The use of biofuels itself, alongside more efficient vehicles and hybrids, could significantly reduce green house gas emissions from the transportation sector, which is almost wholly dependant on oil.

Additionally, he said biofuels also promise important opportunities for industrial development, innovation and high-quality jobs that are all important factors as the country moved towards a knowledge-based economy.

Musa's speech was delivered by Deputy Chief Minister cum Resource Development and Information Technology Minister Datuk Dr Yee Moh Chai, who also officiated at the ceremony on his behalf.