

UMS to continue efforts to prevent extinction of rhinos

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will continue to support efforts to prevent the extinction Sumatran rhinos, Malaysia's most endangered species.

Its Vice-Chancellor, Prof Datuk Seri Dr Kamaruzaman Hj Ampon stressed this to the Board of Directors of Borneo Rhino Alliance (Bora) during Bora's courtesy call to his office here June 7.

"The administrative headquarters of Bora is located within UMS. In addition to that, UMS will be happy to host post-graduate students who may wish to conduct research on the Sumatran rhino in Sabah," Kamaruzaman said.

Formerly known as SOS Rhino Borneo, Bora is

a Sabah-based non-governmental organisation, established as a non-profit company, dedicated to working to save Sabah's - as well as Malaysia's and Borneo's - most endangered wild animal species, the rhinoceros.

Bora informed the Vice-Chancellor that the Sumatran rhino is now so rare that the species probably has a chance to survive only in Sumatra and Sabah.

"Focusing on one species, that may well go extinct without a programme to reduce death rates and increase birth rates, has the advantage of ensuring that we target our efforts and avoiding distractions," said director of the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ITBC) at UMS

and Bora Chairman, Associate Professor Dr Abdul Hamid Ahmad.

"But the rhino is down to such low numbers (that) no one can be sure that the species will survive in Malaysia. Working with the Sabah Wildlife Department and other key institutions, we will give it our best shot.

"Whatever happens, twenty or thirty years from now, we can all look back assured that we did whatever we could to save a species from extinction."

Executive Director of Bora, Dr Junaidi Payne, who is also consultant to WWF-Malaysia, thanked Kamaruzaman and Abdul Hamid for providing office space for Bora in the ITBC.