



Mohammed Fikhree (left) exchanging documents with Kassim while Salleh (second left) looks on.

Sabah's film industry needs KL support, says Salleh

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Stephanie Lee

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah's film industry, in particular production companies owned by locals, is in need of a shot-in-the-arm from the Federal Government.

State Assembly Speaker, Datuk Salleh Keruak said this is because there are a lot of talents here, who can be part of the entertainment industry, but that opportunity and assistance are still lacking.

"The Federal government should provide certain quotas and allocation for production companies owned by Sabahans to develop the industry to a higher level," he said.

He said this after witnessing the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and North Borneo Media Sdn Bhd on Wednesday.

He said there are many folk tales as well as resources which

could be made into documentaries and so on.

"Which is why I think local companies here could help improve the industry in Sabah and generate income if developed properly," Salleh said.

"Of course, these companies must also prove that they are able to produce international standard films, animations and documentaries so that allocations and assistance can be rendered," he added.

Development in this industry also means more employment opportunities for locals, many of whom have to go to Peninsular Malaysia to pursue their interest, as opportunities are better there, he pointed out.

Earlier, UMS Vice Chancellor, Prof. Datuk Dr. Kamaruzaman Hj. Ampon hoped the MoU would act as a platform for local talents to go a step further in the film and production industry.

"Asian countries like Hong Kong, India, Thailand and South Korea have moved so much forward in developing the industry. Even Singapore is taking aggressive steps in encouraging main players in the industry such as Universal Studio and Lucasfilm to invest in the country.

"Hopefully we too are able to plan something big in this creative industry and subsequently open up more employment opportunities for our youth," he said.

His speech was delivered by Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof Madya Datuk Dr. Kassim Mansur.

The MoU would see students of the university's School of Arts providing their expertise in animation and other related fields while the newly established production company would be in charge of other aspects.

Meanwhile, company Managing Director, Mohammed Fikhree Abu Bakar who is also an actor hopes to find a formula among students, lecturers and company staff to bring the industry a step further in Sabah, and later the country.

For a start an animation film on Maliau Basin and the people living there is also in the making, which is expected to be out in January.

On other developments, Salleh said the ongoing issue regarding PKR Wanita chief, Zuraida Kamaruddin's demand for her counterpart in Umno, Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, to step down in the wake of the RM250 million NFC financial debacle, should be left to the leadership.

Zuraida had said that Shahrizat should step down following the latter's failure to reply to accusations of corruption and siphoning more than RM80 million to family-owned businesses.

"Even though NFC have made an explanation about the whole issue, there are still many questions and doubts from others, so I think we should just leave it to the leadership to take the appropriate action," he said.