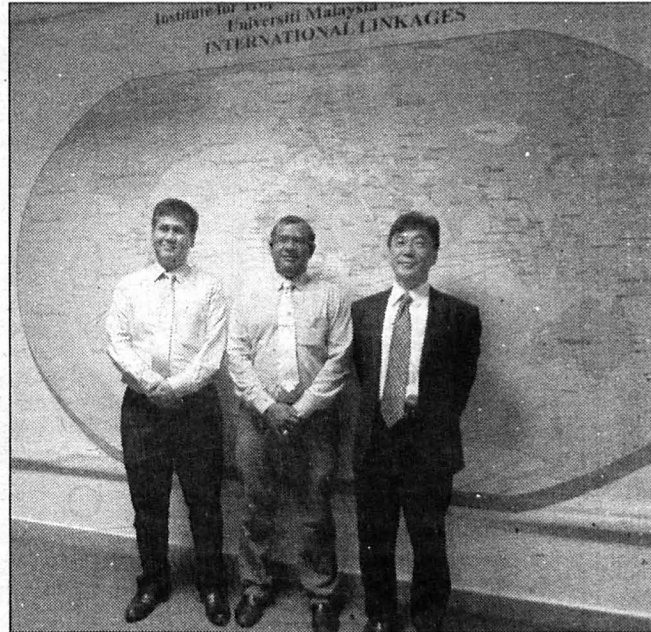


# Sabah green conservation efforts & ecotourism goes global

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Prof Dr Charles (centre) at the press conference accompanied by Hiroyuki (right) and Gerald (left).



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**By MOHD IZHAM  
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**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah's remarkable success in green conservation efforts and ecotourism had put the state on the world map and continues to be a role model for developing countries in tropical biodiversity management

"Sabah is well-positioned to lead conservation initiatives in the country given its growing reputation as an ecotourism destination and success in managing biodiversity," said Prof Dr Charles S. Variappan, Director of the Institute of Tropical Biology and Conservation (ITBC) of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

Contrary to claims of deforestation for oil palm, Prof Dr Charles highlighted that conservation efforts headed by the Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) has expanded the number of forest reserves, wildlife corridors in the state for the last 5-10 years.

"Sabah is very unique in nature tourism and tropical biodiversity, which is why

UMS is selected as the training institution for conservation," he said during the press conference of the Third Country Training Programme (TCTCP) yesterday.

The programme, now in its 3rd cycle (2016-2018) is derived from the United Nations Triangular Cooperation Initiative with expertise provided by the government agencies such as the Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), Sabah Forestry Department and Sabah Parks, as well as Sabah Biodiversity Centre (SABC).

A total of 20 participants from 11 countries which include national park officers and wardens, agriculturists, government officials and agriculturists will be joining the TCTCP programme from Sept 8 until Sept 27 at various designated training venues at the west coast, including Penampang, Keningau, Beaufort and Klias.

"We are keen to share the knowledge, expertise and experience on integrated biodiversity and ecosystem conservation acquired through

years of conservation efforts in the state," said Prof Dr Charles, who noted participants will also get the opportunity to join field visits learn first-hand on biodiversity management and conservation initiatives in Sabah.

The participating countries in the 3rd TCTP programme include Malaysia, Cambodia, Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, India, Sri Lanka, Botswana, Kenya, Mali, Uganda and Tanzania.

According to Senior Geologist of the State Natural Resource Office, Gerald Jetony said the TCTP programme is a conducive platform to showcase the state's commitment and efforts to conservation and sustainable development.

"For us, this is a form of national recognition that Sabah is doing better when it comes to conserving our priceless natural resources

compared to other parts of Malaysia," he said, noting the programme is a joint initiative between the Malaysian Department of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Among those in attendance include JICA Sabah Chief Advisor, Hiroyuki Hatori.

According to Prof Dr Charles, participants would learn research and education, park and habitat management, public awareness and integrated conservation and undertake field trips to protected areas in the west coast of Sabah.

He said the training among other things to emphasise integrated efforts between agencies and locals for better understanding of alternative livelihood in conservation, facilitate sharing of experiences, and develop like-minded officers in developing countries towards working together in conservation.