



Assafal (standing, right) witnesses the MoU signing ceremony between UMS and Tambisan Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd at the university's campus yesterday.

# Tambisan villagers to gain from tourism activities

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**KOTA KINABALU:** A Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Tambisan Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is poised to not only improve the living standards of Tambisan villagers through tourism but also encourage them to take care of the environment.

Assistant Tourism, Culture and Environment minister Assafal P Alian said the smart partnership between UMS, through its Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy (FPEP), and Tambisan Travel and Tours can only be realized with the involvement of all parties.

He added UMS should be the agent of change that will consistently do research activities to identify issues and opportunities for the Lahad Datu village whilst the students would help to carry on the tradition so the village will continue to have development in tourism, entrepreneurial, marine life and historical heritage.

"The current trend shows that environmental conservation efforts is now seen as a new tourism product attraction (new product development). Involvement of tourists in conservation efforts will increase tourists' knowledge and experience. As an example, volunteer tourism," said Assafal during the MoU signing ceremony at the UMS campus here yesterday.

"Tambisan village residents who work mostly as fishermen

can improve their standard of living by increasing the value of their daily activities by engaging in tourism activities. Improved value can increase their income and indirectly improve their standard of living," he added.

The assistant minister said the UMS-Tambisan Travel and Tour project can also be the basis of the community-based tourism industry, in which the community is the driving force behind tourism activities in their area.

"Travel-based community-based tourism benefits the local community and can help increase family income as a side income. Additionally, the development of each affected area can be developed with the improvement of basic amenities," he said.

"Additionally, if villagers see the benefits of this tourism indirectly allowing them to appreciate nature, they will be more likely to conserve the uniqueness of their flora and fauna," he emphasized.

UMS deputy vice chancellor (Research & Innovation) Prof Dr Shahril Yusof, representing vice chancellor Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin, and Tambisan Travel and Tours managing director Antin Sheikh Ismail were at the ceremony to ink the MoU.