

Call for UMS studies on indigenous laws

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KOTA KINABALU: Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Tan Sri Richard Malanjum suggested Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) consider starting a programme which looks into the indigenous laws in Sabah and Sarawak.

"I am making this suggestion because we have a big problem about the indigenous laws in Sabah and Sarawak," he said when launching the 7th International Conference on Law and Society at UMS, here, Wednesday.

He said it is a subject in some local universities in the peninsula but that's only the tip of the iceberg.

"Yesterday, I attended another meeting with the local communities. They can actually tell you the real meaning of life, the meaning of sustainable development, the meaning of how to live when there is nothing more to look at. That's the lesson I could draw from the discussion," he said.

He said those are the things that should be preserved because one day we will need them.

"I think if only there could be a kind of certificate or diploma in indigenous studies that can be started by UMS possibly under the School of Humanities, that would be wonderful," he said.

His promise to be the first to help out and to give lectures drew claps from the participants of the three-day conference.

On another note, Malanjum said they are already collecting materials everywhere, adding that they have in fact already had three meetings for all the indigenous leaders.

"We are actually documenting them and hopefully in a year or so we can get it fully done and conduct a workshop and so forth.

"Our biggest fear is the young generations. They seem to have forgotten their ancestors...they need to know their ancestors to be able to move forward.

"They think that WhatsApp is good enough in life. I don't think that's right, so that is how it is...the young are the ones we want to inculcate the love and also the attachment to their culture and identity.

"Once those are lost, you will have no



Malanjum (second from right) officiating at the conference's opening ceremony. Also seen are Zaki (right), Zaleha and Kamarudin (left)

identity as a human being, so that is the reason why we are so worried about the young, they have seemed to have forgotten that.

"I hope therefore that UMS can help us out in this," he said.

On a lighter note, he encouraged participants, especially first time visitors here, to take time to visit the State capital.

"The night life in Kota Kinabalu is very interesting, with Jalan Gaya itself being literally a 24-hour celebration, a very pleasant and a peaceful place to walk around," he said.

He said four years ago, there were some snatch thefts there and UMS Board of Directors Chairman Tun Zaki Tun Azmi, who was the Chief Justice then, said "look, we need to be serious about this."

"So we started sending them to jail, imposing heavy sentences and whipping them, and so of course it has gone down, thanks to Zaki for alerting us on that.

"Now we don't have many of those snatch thefts and of course the police force is very alert in all this, so walk around in Kota Kinabalu," he said.

Towards this end, he congratulated the organisers for holding the talk in UMS and

hoped more such conference will be held here to attract more intellectual discussions.

"UMS may even be a seat of wisdom in time to come," he said.

Meanwhile, UMS Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin, in his welcoming speech, said he had an earlier discussion with conference moderators who asked why they don't have law programme in Sabah.

"It is actually a very interesting issue to discuss and I would like to mention that we cannot be starting something with a full programme maybe, but we probably will find a way to programme with our counterpart.

"Maybe we can collaborate with the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) or maybe other universities that has law programme and see how they can move forward," he said.

He, however, declined to elaborate when approached for further comments on the matter.

Also present was IIUM Rector Professor Dato' Sri Dr Zaleha Kamaruddin, among others.