

# Dynamic workforce needed in marine fields

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**Sherell Jeffrey**

**KOTA KINABALU:** Malaysia has national interests in protecting marine ecosystem services that play an increasingly important role in the economy, lifestyle and everyday life.

Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau said the country needs a dynamic workforce with diverse skills and expertise in marine related fields to deal with issues that are environmental, economic, social, cultural and related to national security.

In this context, he said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) as an institution of higher education can contribute significantly to producing ocean professionals and different levels of workforce to help the country more effectively to govern its marine heritage.

Tangau said this in his speech when officiating at the International Conference on Marine Science and Aquaculture, themed, "Ocean Governance: Issues, Priorities and Strategies", at the Magellan Sutera, here, Wednesday.

His speech was delivered by his Ministry's Deputy Secretary-General Associate Professor Dr Ramzah Dambul.

Tangau went on to say that it is not just the marine and aquaculture scientists but also other disciplines such as engineers,

technologist, sociologists and economists who will have to collectively find innovative and smart ways to integrating marine science concepts, engineering methods, technological solutions, and environmental, social and economic considerations to meet the marine workforce needs of the country.

"Universities with comprehensive programmes of education are in a better position to do it," he added.

"I can see the potential of UMS in taking lead in matters related to marine biodiversity, marine protected areas, ecological aquaculture, ecological fisheries, seafood security and other need-based topics," he said.

He also officiated the official launching of UMS' 98-page Borneo Journal of Marine Science and Aquaculture during the event.

He noted that the journal was announced last year but only finally saw the light of day this year on Wednesday.

"The journal of international remit will provide a platform to scientists across the globe to publish their work and other scientists to see our work.

"I believe, through such consistent efforts the Borneo Marine Research Institute will gain in its national and international profile," he said.

On another note, he said ocean gover-

nance is a very complex and highly technical matter, and it is a work in progress because of the vastness of the sea and limitations of our capabilities.

He said that no matter how challenging ocean governance is, the world cannot afford to ignore this matter.

"There is too much at stake since over three billion people depend on marine biodiversity for their livelihoods, more than 2.6 billion people depend on the oceans for their primary source of protein, and marine fisheries directly or indirectly employ over 200 million people.

"Globally, the market value of marine and coastal resources and industries is estimated at USD3, trillion (RM11, 705,400,000,000) per year. This makes five per cent of global gross domestic product.

"Since ocean management is a very international issue, international conferences such as this one can provide a suitable platform for discussion of the pertinent issues," he said.

Also present were UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr D Kamarudin Mudin, Borneo Marine Research Institute Prof Dr Rossita Shapawi, Sutera Harbour Group Chief Operating Officer Kenneth Goi Kok Ming and Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) Chairman Heinrich Jessen, among others.



**Ramzah (right) holding the newly launched Borneo Journal of Marine Science and Aquaculture. Also seen are (from left to right) Kamarudin, Rossita, Jessen and Goi.**