



Santa Claus brings 'presents' for Ongkili (fourth left), D Kamarudin and other guests during the launching ceremony.

'Unity in diversity core strength of our progress'

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Ricardo Unto

KOTA KINABALU: Unity in diversity is the core strength for the progress of Malaysia, said Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili.

In certain countries, he said, diversity becomes a challenge and a source of conflict.

"We should uphold this unity so that it could be passed down to the next generation," he said when launching the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Christmas celebration, here, Saturday.

"Furthermore, Sabah and Sarawak often become a reference point, a perfect model of 1Malaysia in terms of unity, cooperation and peace."

Commending the UMS Christmas celebration which was the sixth year it was conducted by the university, Ongkili said it is a good avenue for attendees to forge greater understanding between one another, regardless of race and religion.

"Such celebrations offer an opportunity for us to know more about our friends and bridging the gap between us.

"This opportunity should be appreciated and continued so that our thinking is more open to accept similarities and differences between the various race and religion in Malaysia which may promote mutual respect.

"As such, I think this Christmas celebration should be continued in future so that it



will create a stronger understanding among the people, especially within UMS," he said.

Themed 'Unity', the Christmas celebration was attended by about 3,000 people, mostly UMS students. Attendees were entertained by various stage performances by students, as well as guest artists, namely Juwita Suwito and Rosario Bianis.

UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin said such celebrations symbolise the harmonious 1Malaysia spirit among undergraduates.

"UMS aims to produce graduates who practise good values to strengthen the ability to cooperate as a team player.

"Events such as the Christmas celebration not only contributes towards the self-development of undergraduates in organising events, but it could also polish their communication skills.

"Their commitment to ensure the success of this event is a proof that this university is able to produce world-class and high-skilled individuals," he said.