

# JICA, UMS and Sabah govt launch two new programs

By Mariah Doksil

**KOTA KINABALU:** The signing of the Record of Discussions (RD) of two technical cooperation between the Sabah government, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was held at Wisma Innoprise yesterday.

The signing of the RD will be the official kick-off of the two programmes, namely, Project on Sustainable Development for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation in Sabah (SDBEC) and Integrated Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Training Course.

Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sabah regional office, Mahruzahrin Maskan, said the ministry, as co-sponsor for the project is very honoured that the Sabah government continues to collaborate with them under the third country training programme for the second cycle.

"The collaboration between our ministry and JICA for this programme is to support the second phase of the Bornean Biodiversity and Ecosystem Conservation (BBEC) Programme, which was the joint technical cooperation among the state government, Malaysian federal government and JICA under Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

"In this second phase, with the objective to improve the capacity and information dissemination in biodiversity conservation, the Economic Planning Unit

(EPU) and JICA had earlier collaborated in the first cycle of the programme. This cycle ended in September 2012," he said.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mahruzahrin added, has agreed to continue the programme collaboration with JICA in the second cycle of cooperation from 2013-2017.

In this new cycle, he said, the training course is designed to share experience gained in BBEC 1 with other parts of the world such as Asean, the Pacific Islands, South Asian and African countries.

The Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ITBC), UMS, one of Malaysia's renowned research centre in tropical biology and conservation, has been tasked to undertake the training course.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is truly grateful that Sabah has given its full commitment to support the programme. In this regard, we would like to offer our deep gratitude to the Sabah state agencies involved in this training programme such as the Natural Resources Office, Sabah Parks, Sabah Forestry Department and Sabah Wildlife Department," he said.

According to the chief advisor of SDBEC project, Suzuki Kazunobu, SDBEC is expected to achieve two outputs within the next four years of the project period, namely, capacity is developed to realise a society in harmony with nature in the project sites and Sabah's experiences are shared

nationally and internationally for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

SDBEC is a followup of BBEC, a ten-year technical cooperation between Sabah, UMS and JICA in Sabah.

SDBEC will support the implementation of the plan and strategy developed under BBEC. The focus would be on the implementation of Lower Kinabatangan-Segama Management Plan, to develop and support the implementation of Management Plan of the proposed Crocker Range UNESCO's, Man and Biosphere Reserve and to assist in the implementation of Sabah Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

The training will be jointly conducted under Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Third Country Training programme of JICA on a 50/50 basis.

The state government was represented by Sabah state secretary, Tan Sri Sukarti Wakiman, in the signing of the RD for SDBEC. While, chief representative of JICA Malaysia office, Kunihiro Sato, represented JICA and deputy vice chancellor of UMS, Prof. Dr. Shahril Yusof (Research and Innovation) represented UMS.

The RD of Integrated Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Training Course was signed by the acting director of ITBC, Charles Vairappan.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Sukarti.



**Sukarti (second right) witnessing the exchanging of the Record of Discussions (RD) document between Vairappan (second left) and Sato while Dr. Shahril (left) looks on.**