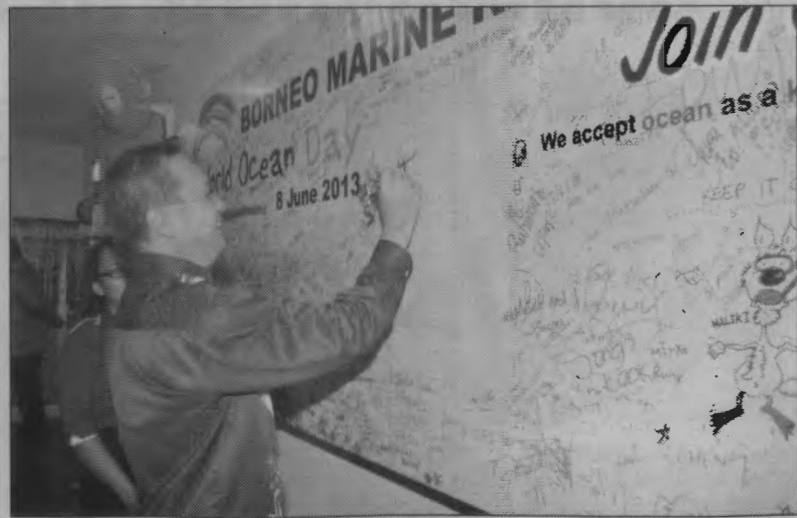


UMS celebrates World Ocean Day



Dr Saleem (right) presents a memento to Dr Felix



Dr Felix writing his pledge to save the ocean

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) celebrates the World Ocean Day by promoting awareness of the ocean through its launching of 'Ocean Outreach Corner' and the information bulletin 'Ocean: Facts & Views'.

According to the vice chancellor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, with ocean governance taking a centre stage of the world attention today, knowledge management should be the focus to support the quest for innovation in dealing with issues related to ocean ecosystem in a changing climate.

He said the 'Ocean Outreach Corner' will provide very useful information to the visitor as they will not only see and admire the beauty of the underwater life but also gain knowledge of the marine world.

Dr Harun also praised the efforts of UMS Borneo Marine Research Institute in producing the information bulletin 'Ocean: Facts & Views' for public viewing.

"I have been made to understand this bulletin contains facts about oceans and thought-provoking views of our scientists which are original and intended to provoke serious thinking, and with powerful carry home message," said Dr Harun in his speech when launching the UMS World Ocean Day 2013 at UMS Marine Aquarium & Museum here yesterday.

The speech was read by the director of UMS Research Centre & Innovation Professor Dr Felix Tongkul.

He added that if scientists, the corporate sector and the journalists can champion the cause of oceans and their importance in combating the effect of climate change, the collective efforts will succeed in bringing the society on board.

"By studying the ocean and exploring our links with this massive ecosystem, we can learn our close connection and gain better understanding of how our activities can have a positive or negative impact on the ocean.

"The ocean is the largest carbon sink on Earth but little attention has been paid to the coastal and marine ecosystems in addressing the climate mitigation towards this end," he said.

Additionally, Harun said that the fact that so much of knowledge about the ocean that we claim to know looks so little when it comes to managing it, should make us think of the vastness and complexity of the oceans.

"We are all connected to the oceans no matter where we live and where we breathe. We need to appreciate what ocean means to all of us and what we need to do to protect it.

"Caring for the sea that gives us so much is an obligation for the whole world. The ocean takes 71 per cent of the earth surface and it also makes our living possible on

this planet," he said.

Meanwhile, the deputy director & coordinator of Eco-Campus Programme, Associate Professor Dr Rossita Shapawi said that UMS will hold several activities in conjunction of the World Ocean Day which include the signing of a pledge and the 'Ocean We Want' essay contest result announcement besides the launching of UMS information bulletin 'Ocean: Facts & Views' and the opening of the 'Ocean Outreach Corner'.

She said through the interactive events and strong messages, UMS will try its level best to generate public awareness of the oceans and need to conserve this vital ecosystem, especially the marine biodiversity.

"Marine biodiversity is an asset of vital importance to economic activities such as seafood security and marine ecotourism.

"Our decision to open the informative 'Ocean Outreach Corner' is essentially to disseminate information on the plight of the oceans and need for intensive research, training and conservation and sustainable development activities," said Dr Rossita.

Besides information panels, the 'Ocean Outreach Corner' will provide interactive learning materials and sculptures and cut-outs depicting the biodiversity of the coral reef ecosystems of Sabah were set up for the visitors.

She added that the information bulletin contains scientific facts about oceans and UMS views in ocean-related issues so pertinent that these need to be taken seriously in this 21st century.

"The importance of oceans cannot be overstated. Their complexity surpasses the complexity of all other ecosystem. It is the complexity which is an element of stability and a bulwark against the impacts as powerful as climate change," she said.

Also present was director of Borneo Marine Research Institute Professor Dr Saleem Mustafa.