

UMS introduces seaweed mini estate project in Semporna

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has introduced a seaweed mini estate project in Semporna to develop seaweed as one of the country's export commodities.

The mini estate is UMS' pilot project which is aimed at generating income and contributing to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.

According to UMS Vice Chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, the seaweed mini estate development, spearheaded by UMS since 2010, consists of two

phases that run concurrently.

The first phase (2011-2020) focuses on infrastructure development and the mini estate management including the appointment of leading companies and identifying a suitable location for seaweed cultivation particularly in Semporna.

The second phase (2013-2020)

is on product development and marketing of seaweed-based products with tremendous potential in the food industry, cosmetics, health products, pharmaceuticals, horticulture and biofuels.

Dr Harun said this in his speech at the opening of a seminar on 'Issues and Challenges of Seaweed Industry' in UMS here yesterday. His speech was read by UMS Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor Dr Shahril Yusof.

Dr Harun urged the UMS researchers to search for new ideas on effective management techniques, to overcome the marketing challenges and to produce new commercial market oriented products in order to generate income and create successful seaweed entrepreneurs.

Meanwhile, one of the speakers from UMS School of Science and Technology, Associate Professor Dr Suhaimi Md Yasir, said the UMS mini estate system had many improvements over the conventional methods of seaweed farming.

"The system eliminates the conventional use of nylon strings to tie seaweed and replaced it with the UMS designed eco-friendly Tie-Tie, which is a seaweed-based rope and also the use of seaweed fertilisers, seedling pin tables or commonly known as Casino Table and anchor," he said.



Dr Suhaimi

"Another improvement is the green energy method in the seaweed drying process whereby sauna and dry method is used instead of the conventional open drying method to avoid overexposure to the sunlight," he added.

Dr Suhaimi urged private companies to invest in the seaweed industry as it offers big business opportunities and generates high income.

He also said that the Malaysian seaweed industry was poised to produce 150,000 metric tons of high quality processed seaweed worth RM 1.45 billion by the year 2020.

Also present were the seminar organising chairman, Dr Gaim James Lunkapis and Head of Ethnography Research and Development Unit (UPEP), UMS School of Social Science, Associate Professor Dr Rosazman Hussin.



Dr Shahril (centre) receives a memento from Dr Gaim