UMS to start undergraduate course in oil and gas

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By Jonno Lajun

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will be starting its undergraduate course in oil and gas at its School of Engineering and Information Technology.

"It also plans to introduce diploma programmes in five disciplines, namely in the process, instrumentation, mechanical, electrical and utility sectors at its campus in UMS Labuan, with the strategic objective to become a leading player in oil and gas manpower development with Labuan Financial Services Authority's collaboration during 2014," said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) vice chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah.

This was in view of the expected demand for manpower annually in the oil and gas sector, he said in his speech read by the dean of Engineering and Information Technology School, Associate Professor Dr Rosalam Hj Sarbatly at the launch of the International Oil and Gas Symposium and Exhibition 2013 at 1Borneo near here.

"Malaysia is the second largest oil and natural gas producer in Southeast Asia, the second largest exporter of liquefied natural gas globally, and is strategically located amid important routes for seaborne energy trade. Malaysia's oil reserves are the fifth highest in the Asia-Pacific and one of the top 30 highest reserves in the world. With major shifts underway in the oil and gas hub with offshore projects such as Kiekh, Gumusut Kakap, Malikai, Kebabangan, Jangas, Ubah Crest, Pisangan and Kamunsuand onshore proejcts SOGT, Sipitang Oil and Gas Industrial Park (SOGIP) and Kimanis-Bintulu gas pipeline," he said.

Dr Rosalam (second right) at the launch of the International Oil and Gas Symposium and Exhibition yesterday.

"In all these, oil and gas upstream and downstream industries need 16,000 skilled manpower annually to meet the growing demand by 2020 as outlined by the Federation of Accredited Department of Skills Development Malaysia," he added.

Dr Mohd Harun said the university aspired to work with the institutions, industries and research organisations to create a culture of excellence, investing in skills, and encouraging research and innovation.

"Now it is for the industry as a whole to play a greater role in developing human capital through partnerships and collaborations and working with learning institutions to develop the oil and gas talent and for new discoveries," he said.

He then encouraged researchers, students and other professionals to consider oil and gas engineering and technology in their work so that they can compete with researchers on a global level with confidence.

"It is an ideal platform for exploring business opportunities in the oil and gas sector of this region through an effective interfacing with industry leaders and key stakeholders," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Rosalam mentioned that Sabah is producing between 170,000 to 180,000 oil barrels per day and this would probably increase to 250,000 to 300,000 barrels within two to three years from now.

He added that oil and gas companies were not merely concentrating on offshore oil but also that of onland.

He said that onland oil had been found in Klias and while the oil reserve was not much, it was economically feasible as a business to extract it.

Dr Rosalam also educated the media on the difference between Sweet-oil and Sour-oil.

"Sweet-oil, which is found in Sabah, has less impurities like heavy metals and sulphur. It almost doesn't produce any carbon dioxide. The major component is mainly natural gas and oil only. That means, here, the production is more profitable as they are cheaper to process," he said.