

# Collaborate with Malaysian institutions on ant research – UMS

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The International Network for Ant Research in Asia (ANeT) has been asked to collaborate with local institutions in Malaysia, particularly in Sabah, on ant research or myrmecology.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah said UMS, for instance, had been hosting local and foreign ant researchers for the last 15 years, via its Institute of Tropical Biology and Conservation (ITBC).

“UMS acts as the main institution that conducts, coordinates and facilitates research activities, in collaboration with the state agencies, namely Sabah Forestry Department, Sabah Wildlife Department and Sabah Parks, among others.

“Even our Sabah Biodiversity Centre is now fully functional in enforcing Sabah’s Biodiversity Enactment 2000 where researchers are required to go through the proper evaluation of research proposal before the access and export of specimen permits are granted,” he said when opening the 9th ANeT International Conference here yesterday.

Mohd Harun noted a collaboration between ANeT and UMS, as well as other institutions in Malaysia could assist researchers on understanding the decision-making process in ant individuals and colonies, complex management of the colony and computer algorithms relating to the world’s tiniest creatures.

ANeT president Dr Himender Bharti said apart from cataloguing the ant biodiversity, myrmecologists in Asia should explore other avenues such as molecular biology, ecology and phylogenetics to generate a holistic view regarding Asian ants.

“The different disciplines will not only help bridge the gap in our knowledge, but will also allow young researchers to explore different possibilities,” he said.

He also proposed that the conference participants initiate and build a database of Asian ants that would help catalogue the biodiversity of ants from Southeast Asia. – Bernama

Also present at the launching ceremony was UMS IBTP director Assoc Professor Dr Charles S. Vairappan.



Dayang Rukiah (centre) receiving a souvenir from Charles, while Himender (left) looks on.