

# UMS, MARA to strengthen Bumiputera entrepreneurship

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By Murib Morpi

**KOTA KINABALU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to pave the way for collaborative efforts, particularly in formulating strategic development programmes for Bumiputera entrepreneurs in Sabah.

The signing, held in conjunction with the ongoing MARA International Conference and Exhibition on Entrepreneurship (ICE) 2013 here, was also aimed at establishing a collaborative platform for improving the products offered by local businesses.

UMS deputy vice chancellor (Research and Innovation) Prof Dr Shahril Yusof said the university could contribute significantly to MARA's effort in strengthening the economic participation of the Bumiputera.

The university, he said, has the

expertise and resources to help local businesses meet the product and service standards of foreign markets they wish to explore.

"UMS can offer a lot of product research and development as well as marketing research," he told reporters after representing vice chancellor Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah to exchange LoI documents with MARA deputy director general Dato' Hanisah Omar.

He said a lot of exciting planning and activities were expected to be carried out following the LoI and actual collaborative agreements that would be inked after this.

As such, he urged local businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, to keep tab and make full use of any facilities or platform to be set up through the collaboration.

He noted that UMS will work with MARA to establish a system where local entrepreneurs would be encouraged to team up with

the university through MARA in improving various aspects of their businesses.

Meanwhile, Harun in his speech at the ICE event earlier, said the signing of the LoI would formalise the relationship between the two partners, which were already actively working together including in the organising of the conference.

The document, he added, would further intensify joint research and development activities as well as facilitate exchange of ideas and findings.

His text was read by Dr Sharil.

ICE 2013 is organized by MARA in partnership with UMS to provide a platform for local businesses to exchange business solution ideas and to network, discuss opportunities and issues facing their industry, and promote and sell their products and services during the event.

ICE Sabah is the second

installation to an event held at KL Sentral, Kuala Lumpur, attracting a bigger number of participants both from Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia.

A total of 48 companies took part in the five-day event held since Wednesday, with organizer expecting to record at least double the sales and networking values registered in the previous ICE in KL.

Hanisah said response for the event had been encouraging as shown in the increase in participants as compared to the previous one, which saw only 18 companies taking part.

Last year, the event was held for three days, reeling in RM50,000 in product sales from the participating booths and an estimated RM1.5 million worth of networking value.

This year, she said they were aiming for no less than RM75,000 in sales and RM3 million in network value.