



Yap (centre) receiving a memento from Prof. Dr Shariff. Looking on from left are Dr Geoffrey, Associate Professor Dr Ismail and Associate Professor Dr Syed Nasirin.

## UMS Labuan shows the way to gather the brains: Yap

**Mary Chin**

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) Labuan School of International Business and Finance (SPKAL) is moving in the right direction in getting eminent speakers for its conferences, who are not just from local universities but also from the international arena.

Deputy Education Minister 1, Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching said Saturday, the initiative was in tandem with Malaysia's aspiration towards achieving international level in education and training as espoused in its National Education Blueprint (2013-2025).

She said Malaysia is desirous of being the education hub for the Asian region, and potentially for the world one day.

"In the context of conferences and seminars, it is not adequate just to engage experts locally. We need to involve distinguished paper presenters and industrial practitioners from overseas.

"This is the way to gather the brains to come together to share information, knowledge and also best practices, this time in the field of international business. Labuan School of International Business and Finance has shown the way," she told a press conference after launching the 2nd Applied International Business Conference (AIBC) with the theme Emerging Megatrends In Asian Market.

Over 100 participants, including academics, postgraduate students and government officials, attended the conference organised by UMS Labuan School of International Business and Finance at the Promenade Hotel, here. Also present was the Director of UMS, Labuan International Campus, Associate Professor Dr Ismail Ali.

Yap, who is Member of Parliament for Tawau, was pleased to note that some of the paper presenters are from the United Kingdom, Australia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, the Philippines and New Zealand.

information technology and various other fields.

"Undoubtedly, their sharing will help shed some light on winning strategies for the next 10 years and beyond. We look forward to grasping more 'insights' into the realm of international business," said Yap.

From another perspective, the Deputy Minister noted that UMS, Labuan International Campus has made strides in progressing from theories and concepts to their application in international trade as evidenced by the working papers this time around.

"This is important because just knowing the theory and concept is not good enough. More importantly, we need to put it into practice and thereby know the impact as well.

"If the desired impact has yet to be achieved, then we could make use of research findings (from studies) to plan for the future development of a particular field, in this case, international commerce," she suggested.

In response to Yap, UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Supt/KS Prof Dr Shariff Abd Kadir S. Omang Al-Haj, who represented the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Datuk Dr Harun Mohd Abdullah, said the conference, which was first held in Labuan in 2008, will be continued in the years to come.

"The Management of UMS supports endeavours (conferences) of this nature. We too will play a part in placing Malaysia on the world map one day in terms of educational achievements," he said.

According to Prof Dr Shariff, the recent emerging Mega-trends in Asian Market have not only impacted on economies in developing countries but also the developed ones.

"Such trends have made nations dependent on one another - hence the need to be competitive and resilient in the face of other challenges in order to attain a higher (if not the highest) level of economic growth," he said.

Earlier, in her opening address, Yap said the fast changing world environment affecting all spheres of life implies that scholars and business people from various backgrounds have to continuously engage through conferences of this kind.

"That way, we can develop and share strategies and solutions on how to approach challenges that face business players and humankind in general in all aspects of life," she said.

On the conference theme, she said it could not be more apt and timely, given that Asia is experiencing various changes related to the way businesses are being conducted as reflected in emerging megatrends.

"Hence, there is constant need to be competitive in order to beat competition and survive. Which is why we are impelled to seek ways to maintain growth and build up future successes.

"We seek ways to maintain the ingredients of high-quality growth that have already characterised Malaysia's economic performance over a long period.

"It remains essential, of course, to maintain macroeconomic stability, pursue market-friendly strategies as well as promote investments in physical and human capital," she pointed out.

Yap gave UMS a pat on the back for its long-term commitment in getting local and international researchers, strategists, experts and practitioners to congregate in a conference for the common good, and this time it is in the field of international business.

"This conference augurs well for collaboration between academic institutions, industries and other organisations," she said. In a lighter vein, the Deputy Minister called on participants and paper presenters from overseas to stay back for a while to enjoy the hospitality of Sabah people and visit tourist destinations. "This is a must," she quipped.

Meanwhile, AIBC2013 Chairman Dr Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal said offshore banking and the concept of Islamic financing are among the emerging Megatrends in the Asian Market.

He said the conference served as a platform for the academics, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers to establish their network and exchange viewpoints and research findings on present-day business and market issues related to the local region and the global world.

"We hope to enhance professional opportunities and business information, knowledge and research development among academics and practitioners," he added.