

# UMS and S'pore varsity sign MoU

**Larissa Lumandan**

**KOTA KINABALU:** Borneo Marine Research Institute of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and National University of Singapore (NUS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation between both universities.

Along with the MoU signing is the implementation of a modular course on coastal management.

According to UMS Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, the signing of the MoU between both universities was the first and it had opened a new opportunity for cooperation with one of the best universities in Asia.

"The MoU formalises the relationship between these two universities in a way that it opens the possibilities of wider cooperation between various departments and academic faculties in UMS and NUS," he said.

Earlier, Harun also said that he hoped the signing of the MoU would define a productive relationship between both institutions of higher education and would later emerge as a showcase of international collaboration in academic programmes.

"National University of Singapore is a well known university and we would have the opportunity gaining more space for collaboration besides opening the eyes of the world on the existence of UMS which is one of our aims in bringing UMS into an international level," he said.

He also said that the course involved student exchange programmes between both universities.

"The student exchange is an ongoing programme and NUS had requested our assistance on coastal management, giving input in terms of marine for the course module. Students will be doing part of the programme in UMS and the other part in NUS," he said.

"Sabah is a place where visiting students from NUS will find a great diversity of habitats and marine flora and fauna. I am sure more discussions will take place between Borneo Marine Research Institute of UMS and NUS to discuss the modalities of implementing this course which looks very interesting," he said.

He added that the management of the marine ecosystem had assumed a great deal of significance due to realisation of the adverse effects of climate change such as ocean acidification.

"It is pertinent to characterise the coastal and marine habitats, identify vulnerable areas and develop climate change adaptation strategies to minimise risk from the vagaries of nature manipulated by human actions. It is a topic of global concern these days and I believe the interaction between UMS and NUS academics will shed new light on a number of topics, including threats from climate change, vulnerability, resilience, and the relevance of adaptation," he explained.



Chou (seated right) and Harun (seated centre) signing of MoU while others look on.

Bachelor of Environmental Studies Programme Director Professor Chou Loke Ming who represented NUS said that they would develop a summer course on sustainability of the coastal environment to be co-taught by faculties from both UMS and NUS during the long vacation next year.

"It will consist of a three-week online learning section and a three-week onsite section with field studies in Sabah," he said, adding that the partnership will synergise the strengths of both universities besides increasing the quality of education to students leading to wider collaboration, not only in teaching but also in research.

"The Borneo Marine Research

Institute is very advanced in marine science offering eco-culture and that is something where students can learn a lot as Sabah has very interesting coastal management issues," he said, explaining that they want students to understand the real situation because these issues could not be found in Singapore which was the reason why they chose to come to Sabah.

"For this course, we will focus on coastal sustainability which involves the richness and diversity of habitats and ways people use them, the management issues and the challenges faced as 70 per cent of the population in South East Asia live in coastal area resulting in higher pressure," he added.