

'Say No to plastic bottle' campaign in UMS

By Chok Sim Yee

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will roll out its 'Say No to Plastic Bottle' campaign in the campus in two months' time.

A pilot test has begun at Chancellery Department Building in the university that will last for two months whereby UMS Cooperative will not be selling bottled mineral water, nor will it supply bottled water to events in UMS.

UMS EcoCampus Management Centre director Dr Awangku Hassanah Bahar Pengiran Bagul said the Chancellery, being the administration of the university, had to set a good example for the campus by taking the lead in the no plastic bottle initiative.

Based on feedback from the cleaning staff at UMS, plastic bottles are the third highest waste collected at the campus, after plastic bags and papers.

Hence, the EcoCampus Management Centre decided to launch the campaign in efforts to replace bottled water with

refillable water bottles as well as by providing water dispensers.

The centre has talked to UMS Cooperative, which supplies mineral water for events, and as a result, the cooperative will no longer sell bottled water.

However, Awangku Hassanah acknowledged that bottled water is necessary for outdoor activities.

"Hence, I gave the cooperative two options. They can sell quality refillable water bottles at RM 10 or less, or they can sell Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottled water that is made with sustainable material which can be recycled."

Awangku Hassanah said this in an interview after giving his welcoming speech at a waste management seminar at UMS here yesterday.

He continued to say that the no plastic bottle initiative was a significant step as the university had launched its EcoCampus campaign.

"We have previously done green office, energy management and waste management initiatives, which are great, but we need to do something significant, like



Awangku Hassanah

the no plastic bag campaign that is implemented thrice weekly in Kota Kinabalu, which has created strong awareness."

On the other hand, Awangku Hassanah said the waste management programme at UMS started early this year which involved separating, disposing and treating recyclable wastes.

The university has previously

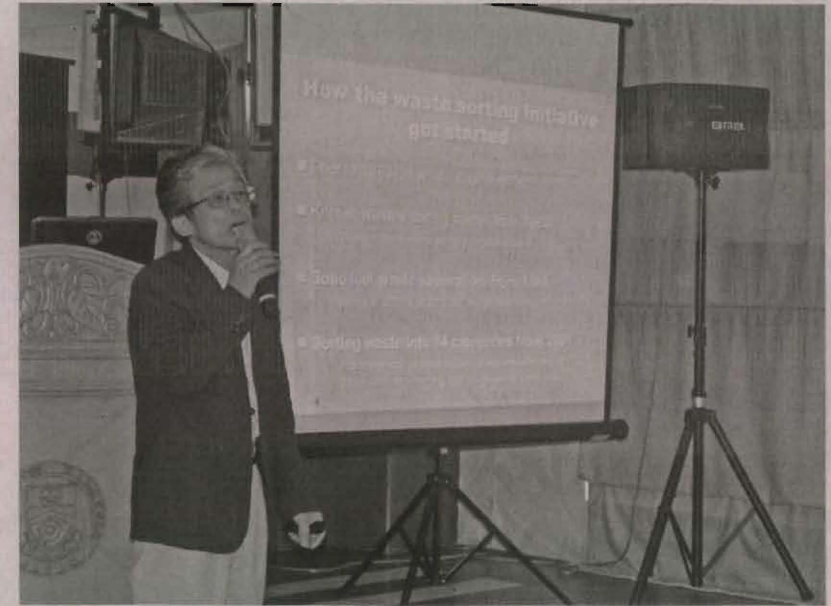
signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hatareka Perunding Sdn Bhd to establish a 700-square-foot recycling centre in the campus. The recycling centre will be fully funded by Hatareka Perunding as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) project.

The recycling centre was supposed to be up and running last month but the operation was postponed to after Hari Raya.

Awangku Hassanah said one of the speakers of the waste management seminar, Nobuyuki Tsuji from Hokkaido University, Japan, was sought to guide the university in its waste management programme.

He said every city in Japan is recycling between 15 and 20 per cent of its wastes, but the recycling programme that Tsuji was involved in at the city of Furano in Japan was recycling 90 per cent of its wastes.

Besides consulting on UMS waste management programme, Tsuji is also facilitating in setting up organic composting at the UMS recycling centre.



Tsuji delivers his presentation on waste management and recycling.

Upon completion of the recycling centre, Awangku Hassanah said the food wastes disposed by restaurants and kitchens at UMS would be converted into composts and quality fertilizers.

He added that dry wastes at the

university were currently being made into energy blocks to be sold to industries as fuel.

"We have been separating our trash and papers to be recycled by a company, but we will do the job in-house when the recycling centre is completed."