

# Goal to push UMS into the top league

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KOTA KINABALU: It is time for the 20-year-old University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to change its ideas into reality and work hard into making the university one of the top in the world.

UMS Vice Chancellor Datuk Mohd Harun Abdullah said since the implementation of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (PSPIN) in 2007, the university had undergone massive transformation including the Academic Achievement Audit by the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA), two levels of SETARA teaching and learning in 2009 and 2011.

"Every year we are audited and thanks to our hard work and diligence, we managed to fulfil all the requirements set by the government," he said during his annual keynote address at the Chancellery Hall, UMS here on Tuesday.

He added that the goal to make the university a world-class entity is not an impossible feat so long as it follows through with its UMS Strategic Plan 2013-2017.

Harun urged all departments, schools, centres, institutes and units (JSPIU) to assess their achievements based on the plan lined up last year which includes enhancing learning and teaching excellence, research and innovation, increasing the university's reputation on the international level, strengthening the



Harun delivering his keynote address.

management, leadership and delivery system, increasing financial sustainability, increasing involvement with the community and industry and contributing to the environment sustainability.

"I am confident we can improve the university in world ranking. I call upon all UMS citizens, let us all together change ideas into reality by ensuring the UMS Strategic Plan is successfully implemented.

"Only by doing this, we can truly develop and achieve the excellence we desire," he said.

Harun continued that in order to increase UMS international recognition, the university will continue to forge academic relationship with other universities such as signing MoU in marine research with National University of Singapore (NUS) and opening another UMS branch

with the help of The International School of Environmental Education Foundation Korea.

Other countries, he said, have also voiced out their interest in building academic relations with UMS including the People's Republic of China, Brunei Darussalam and Timor Leste.

He said although the university can be proud of its achievements, lots of works are still needed to be done. For example, publishing more high-impact academic journals in the future.

"Our country only managed to publish 77,327 journals compared to Singapore's 78,037," he said.

Starting this year, he announced, UMS will only confer Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) to candidates who successfully produced one high-impact journal, two refereed journals and one proceeding journal.

At the same time, Harun reminded the students to explore new academic fields to stay competitive and relevant and increase their involvement with community and industries.

"I urge all JSPIU to think of ways how our expertise can be utilised by the communities and industries so that transfer of knowledge could happen.

"I also want the fruits of our research, marketed and patented as part of our contribution to the country's economic

development. Transfer of knowledge and industry must happen.

"Let our university be judged by the amount of contributions we offered to community and industry and not be content with the number of our research output that comes to nothing," he said.

Touching on security issue, Harun said last year's Tandu incident was a wake up call for the country as a whole.

Since the beginning, he said, UMS had done many research on security issues and collected numerous data which must be shared with security forces.

"In my opinion, the influx of illegal immigrants to Sabah can be considered as a serious security issue. UMS is strategically placed to understand the real situation.

"Our cooperation with Mindanao State University, Palawan State University, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and other universities in Indonesia gave us invaluable opportunities.

"These cooperation must be strengthened because it provides UMS the potential to understand the cause of national security threats. Only UMS is in the position to do this," he said.

UMS is currently ranked 3,785 on 4International College and Universities (4icu.org) website and placed at number 14 below Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas)