

UMS aims to be among world's top varsities

By Jenne Lajjun

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) aspires to be at par with other world's leading universities.

Its vice chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, said the ambition was attainable as long as the university adopted the seven key result areas of the university (UMS-KRA) which had been outlined in the UMS 2013-2017 Strategic Plans.

The seven key result areas emphasise on UMS' excellence in teaching and in learning, in its excellence in research and innovation as well as in improving and strengthening university's international reputation, said Harun.

Additionally, it also focuses on increasing the involvement of industry and the community.

"It is time for UMS to strengthen its position at the international level," Harun stressed, adding that steps have already been taken towards attaining it, which included the signing of a memorandum of understanding for marine research with the National University of Singapore (NUS).

He said this in his 2014 address entitled "Transforming Ideas into



Dr Mohd Harun speaking at the UMS Chancellor Hall yesterday.

Reality' at the UMS Chancellor Hall near here yesterday.

In his speech, Harun also expressed that UMS has the opportunity to be shortlisted

in the government initiative which gives recognition to five universities as research universities.

He hoped some of its 13

remaining research units will be upgraded as UMS Centres of Excellence and mentioned that UMS already has three such centres namely the Borneo

Marine Research Institute and the Biotechnology Research Institute and the Tropical Biology and Conservation Institute.

He said that this was imperative as the university hoped to gain the recognition of the Education Ministry to become one of the country's Centres of Excellence in Higher Learning.

Harun also spoke on safety aspects affecting Sabah and said that the State has a special and unique geography landscape.

He said the Tanduo incident in Lahad Datu last year served as a wake-up call to all in the country and UMS had conducted a lot of research on the issues of safety and had compiled a large amount of data on the matter.

"In my opinion, the influx of illegal immigrants in Sabah can be considered as a serious safety issue," he said.

He further mentioned that the collaboration it has with the Mindanao State University, Palawan State University, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and several universities in Indonesia has provided UMS with the invaluable opportunities.

"The cooperation needs to strengthen because it allows UMS the potential to understand the threats to the country in terms

of socioeconomy, politics, and environmentally," he said.

Harun also cited that nearly 40 percent of UMS graduates were offered employment within the first few months of graduating in 2013. This percentage was similar to those in previous years.

He added that since the university began its operation in 1994, it had already produced 46,318 graduates in various fields.

The university has an average student enrolment of 4,000 per annum.

On the research outputs produced by UMS, Harun said that he hopes see more of UMS researches to be marketed and patented so that they can contribute to the country's economic development.

"Transfer of knowledge and technology must be conducted. Let UMS be measured through its contribution to the people and industry and not on how many research outputs that do not provide any returns," he said.

In this context, he said the state government via the State Economic Planning Unit had requested UMS to lead the technical workgroup to formulate the State Economic Action Plan.