

NST 19.3.2014 4

Sustainable devt of marine resources achievable

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KOTA KINABALU: Sustainable development of marine resources is achievable if scientific advice based on biological, social and economic considerations is integrated in the formulation of policies regulating the utilisation of renewable resources.

The time has come for us to understand that resources are not finite and ecosystem can renew itself if the processes are allowed to operate to replace resources that are outdated, said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) deputy vice chancellor Prof Dr Sharif Abd Kadir Omang

Al-Haj.

Speaking at the "International Conference on Marine Science & Aquaculture 2014: Ecosystem Perspectives in Sustainable Development" at 1Borneo Hypermall here yesterday, he said it is good that scientific opinion is being sought in Malaysia for development planning.

The marine ecosystem studies that are being carried out by Borneo Marine Research Institute of UMS can support the economic development of coastal areas if measures are practically feasible, he said.

And the research goals need to focus on investing in the maintenance and restoration of marine's critical

functions, synthesis of knowledge and understanding, and communicating that knowledge to the stakeholders, Dr Sharif added.

He said the conference has provided an opportunity for UMS to exchange knowledge and experience for chartering the most appropriate and relevant directions for R&D, and networking with the international scientific fraternity.

Even though the overexploitation of marine biological resources and ocean acidification are global in nature but individual nations can and must work in a regional approach towards controlling the structure and functions of biological communities in their jurisdiction,



Assoc Prof Dr Rossita
Shapawi

urged Dr Sharif.

He said the interest in developing aquaculture has grown when the production from capture fisheries declines and seafood demand

increases.

And UMS would do all it can to create conditions under which this area of research could further develop and the research findings in this field could be commercialised, he said.

The conference chairwoman-cum-Borneo Marine Research Institute director Assoc Prof Dr Rossita Shapawi said the annual conference has provided a platform for sharing and discussing research topics with senior professionals who are well-known in their field of expertise.

She said the world is still lagging behind in accurate reporting of fish production data and effect of conservation measures on the

catch.

"We need indicators for tracking the progress towards sustainability and predicting the potential problems, and means of disseminating the benefits of implementing measures for change.

"We also do not have adequate empirical data on the effects ocean acidification on marine biodiversity and seafood organisms.

"Certainly, we require a review of research priorities, funding mechanisms, monitoring systems, more networking and international cooperation. Some of these and other issues will be highlighted during the course of discussions in this conference," said Dr Rossita.