

# Raise awareness on Sabah's biodiversity, UMS urged

**KOTA KINABALU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) must get the youth and policy makers to understand the value of Sabah's nature.

International Association of Universities (IAU) president Tan Sri Dato Dzulkipli Abdul Razak, in his keynote speech at the First Regional Conference on Campus Sustainability 2014 held at UMS Research Gallery near here yesterday, said the move was imperative as the biodiversity that surrounded the university as well as those sited in Sabah such as the Maliau Basin was invaluable.

"If these places were destroyed because no protection was accorded to them and developments were allowed to encroach, then these assets would be lost forever," he said.

"You cannot re-create what once was ... the richness in the flora and fauna would be gone," he further stated.

Dzulkipli urged the youth to question and to be critical.

He also advised leaders to walk the talk.

He then mentioned his experience going to the Amazon in South America in order to understand more about sustainable living with the indigenous folk.

What he found out during his stay was that the indigenous folk of the Amazon were more sustainable in their everyday living despite the lack of modern amenities.

"They have so little and yet they are very sustainable, and we have so much technology around us and we are not sustainable at all. The idea to consume just because we have access to technology has made us non-sustainable," he said.

Dzulkipli also cited that people must adopt the 4R (refuse, reuse,

reduce and recycle) into their lifestyle.

"Refuse the plastic bags when it is given to you, for example and bring your own bags. Some people just like to accept things and dump these into their storeroom," he said.

In his keynote address, Dzulkipli also touched on Education Sustainable Development (ESD) and how ESD had received the support from 68 countries at the sixth UNESCO session.

He added that being sustainable was a burden to many, and hence stressed that higher learning institutes such as UMS needed to go back to the idea as to what sustainability was all about.

"Sustainability concerns meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs," he explained.

Additionally, being sustainable also meant helping the poor to get out of poverty and improving their quality of life, he said.

At the same time, he also spoke of incorporating the knowledge on sustainability into the education system.

"Our education system is not linked to the environment sustainability ... sustainability is side-lined in the education sector.

"We need to do a balancing act to make sure that economy, ecology, geo-politics and social culture are balanced ... we need to transform education into that which focuses on sustainability ... the system has to change," he said.

"We need to start re-organising the universities ... there must be a shift in the system from non-sustainable to sustainable for instance in the consumption of water, energy," he said.