

UMS launches TCTP 2014

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Dr Harun (centre) accompanied by Mahruzahrin (centre left), Dr Charles (centre right) and Yoshizawa (second left from centre) along with senior UMS staff and 20 participants from seven countries namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda and Sri Lanka who are taking part in the Sabah TCTP 2014.

KOTA KINABALU: In recognition of an integrated approach towards biodiversity and ecosystem management, University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) yesterday launched the TCTP 2014 training programme to prepare the next cadre of scientists and conservation leaders.

"The Sabah TCTP paves the way forward for closer collaboration between developing nations to share knowledge, experiences as well as pooling ideas aimed at developing an integrated approach towards environmental stewardship and ecosystem management," said UMS Professor Dr Harun Abdullah, adding Sabah's rich and diverse biodiversity has much to offer for conservation and environmental research.

This year, the TCTP (or Third Country Training Programme) for biodiversity and ecosystem management enters its second phase of the second cycle with 20 participants from seven countries, including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda and Sri Lanka taking part in the three-week course which begins from August 7-28.

Sabah TCTP is part of the Borneo Biodiversity & Ecosystem (BBEC) programme which forms a technical collaboration between UMS, the Sabah government and the Japanese government's bilateral developmental assistance through JICA (or Japan International Cooperation Agency).

The programme aims to provide relevant knowledge and skills on conservation management from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

In his opening address, Mahruzahrin Maskan, director of Sabah regional office (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) described the programme as a significant step forward for Malaysia in helping other countries achieve sustainable development of their natural resources.

"Sabah, the nation's most populous state is on the right track in becoming a leading example for conservation, research and sustainable utilisation of the nation's biodiversity," he said adding the TCTP programme would provide participants with valuable insights into the various strategies and techniques in managing biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

Meanwhile, JICA representative Shinobu Yoshizawa underlined the importance of strengthening international collaboration to enhance understanding, awareness in addressing environmental issues which would lead to a better framework for conservation and environmental protection.

"Such initiatives trigger a change of perspective among different nations which encourages them to work together towards a holistic, integrated approach in addressing environmental issues which goes far beyond national borders," he told reporters during an interview at the university yesterday.

The programme, according to Yoshizawa also aims at disseminating Japanese technical expertise, key outcomes and research findings to ASEAN, the Pacific, South Asia as well as African countries to strengthen international cooperation on biodiversity conservation throughout the world.

Apart from being a platform to learn from the experiences of Malaysia and Japan, Mahruzahrin said the course also provide the opportunity for participants to learn from each other, adding the diversity of experiences would fuel the greater exchange of ideas that could be implemented upon their return to their respective countries.

Meanwhile, acting director for UMS Institute of Tropical Biology & Conservation (ITBC) Professor Dr Charles Vairappan explained that the TCTP approaches would involve formal classroom lectures as well as extensive field visits to protected areas, interactions with local communities living within the periphery of protected areas and discussions with conservation officers on the ground.



Dr Harun striking the gong marking the launching of Sabah's TCTP 2014 accompanied by Yoshizawa (left) and Mahruzahrin (right).