

# Huge potential for UMS to generate income from tourism receipts — STB

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**KOTA KINABALU:** There is huge potential for Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to generate income and open up its campus as a tourism hot spot, said Sabah Tourism Board (STB) general manager Suzaini Datuk Sabdin Ghani.

Speaking at the soft launching of UMS Eco-Campus Visitors Information Centre (EVIC) and eco-campus tour packages yesterday, she said STB would assist the university in its promotional efforts.

“UMS has a beachfront, marine centre and camping site. We shall help you (UMS) to get Chinese and Korean tourists here,” she promised.

She suggested by starting with a half-day or full-day trip to the campus and getting tourists to stay one to two nights at the camping site.

Suzaini added that the electronic bicycles provided by EVIC will also allow visitors to experience university life in a day trip.

The operations and administration of the centre is managed by UMS business and commercial arm, UMS Investment Holdings Sdn Bhd (UiNVEST).

She said the fact that there had been an increase of about 17 percent of tourists visiting Sabah based on year-to-year comparison of January to June 2017 and the same period this year with Chinese and South Koreans making the bulk of international arrivals, made it even more crucial to increase the number of places, to diversify tourism products as well as create and improve the facilities to better serve the growing number of international tourists.

“Sabah itself recorded about 680,000 international tourists within the same period in 2018, an increase of 16.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

These figures indicate that there is a strong potential in this market segment that had yet to be fully explored, and we are eager to assist UMS, the EVIC and tour agencies to increase the promotional efforts here.”

Meanwhile, UiNVEST group chairman Datuk Ag Buhtamam Ag Mahmud said, STB’s statistics showed an increase of about 17 percent in total international tourist arrival from January to June 2018. Of this, he said China tourists had increased by 44 percent to about 300,000 while South Korean tourists had grown by about 17 percent to 162,000 during the said period.

“In order to provide better services and assistance to the tourists, be it local or international, our UMS EVIC was set up for the purpose of providing easy and friendly guidance to visitors to the university,” he explained.

He said the centre would serve as an information centre and entry ticketing booth.

“It also provides services such as electrical bicycles and buggies for visitors who would like to move around the campus grounds. Proceeds from the tickets will be used to improve the services rendered to tourists visiting UMS,” he said.

Also present was UMS Labuan campus director Associate Professor Dr. Murnizam Hj Halik, who represented UMS vice chancellor Professor Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin.