



Susan (third right) presenting souvenirs to Zhang (third left) and the delegates from Wuyi University.

# UMS to establish collaboration with China's Wuyi University

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By Chok Sim Yee

**KOTA KINABALU:** Learning Mandarin is gaining importance in many countries worldwide with the rise of China, said United Sabah Sze Yip Association president Datuk Susan Wong Siew Guen.

Susan said Sabah has a population of approximately 3.5 million, of which 15 per cent are Chinese.

She said there were nine Chinese independent secondary schools and 83 Chinese primary schools in the State.

"In Sabah, majority of the Chinese community send their children to Chinese schools.

"That said, local bumiputera students also make up a large percentage in Chinese schools as their parents believe that Chinese education would open up wider opportunities for them."

With the rise of China, Susan said many countries has been promoting the learning of Chinese language.

"Mandarin will undeniably become an international language in the future," she said at the welcoming dinner yesterday hosted for a delegation from Wuyi University, China led by its Chancellor Professor Zhang Kun.

Wuyi Universiti will be signing a Letter of Intent (LOI) to establish collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) today (Oct 30). Susan said this signing of LOI marked a new milestone in the bilateral relations between Sabah and Jiangmen city, as well as the first step in academic collaboration.

She said the United Sabah Sze Yip Association was entrusted

by the Jiangmen Municipal People's Government to organize the third World Jiangmen Youth Conference in 2012. During the event, a LOI on promoting friendly exchanges between Kota Kinabalu city and Jiangmen city had been signed by former Kota Kinabalu Mayor Datuk Abidin Madingkir and former Jiangmen Mayor Pang Guomei.

"This signified a major step forward in the Malaysia-China friendship, as well as brought positive impacts to the tourism and economy in Sabah."

She said Wuyi University, founded in 1985, boasted high academic standards and was mainly focused on engineering courses. The campus occupies land area of over 1,000.

She said the university was built with much support and donations from Jiangmen folks in Hongkong and Macau.

Meanwhile, she said UMS was established in 1994 and covered an area of 999 acres.

"UMS' entrance faces Mount Kinabalu, while the other side of the campus faces the South China Sea, which is why the institution is regarded as the most beautiful university in Southeast Asia," she said, adding that UMS has 10 faculties.

Susan said UMS had established the Borneo Marine Research Institute (BMRI) where research and aquaculture of valuable fish stocks were carried out.

At present, she said there were 300 China nationals studying in UMS.

"Upon the signing of the LOI, we hope there will be more China students who choose UMS for their education, including to learn the English language and conduct

marine research."

Meanwhile, Zhang said some 20,000 students were currently enrolled at Wuyi University.

"The university has 14 faculties, mainly offering engineering courses. We also offer business, finance, management, accounting and language courses."

He said the Guangdong provincial government and Jiangmen municipal government have committed to invest RMB 3 billion to develop Wuyi University into one of the top engineering universities in the next five years.

Zhang said the university would be recruiting 300 to 400 professors from renowned universities all over the world in the next four years and he hoped that Malaysian talents would consider the university.

At the same time, he encouraged more Malaysian students to further their studies at Wuyi University.

He said studying at Wuyi University cost around RMB 80,000 a year for tuition fee and accommodation.

Zhang said the university was also keen to establish twinning programmes with UMS for courses that complement each other.

The event also saw the appointment of Susan as a director of Wuyi University.

Also present were Huang Association of Malaysia president Datuk Wong Ten An, Wuyi University Dean of Civil Engineering and Architecture School, Prof Zhou Li, Wuyi University Director of Graduate Department, Prof Yang Tie Niu and Wuyi University Director of the Teaching Affairs Department.