



Madius (standing centre, front row) with speakers, guests and participants of the 'Symposium on the Origins of the Indigenous People of Sabah 2019,' at UMS Recital Hall.

Impacts of migration are worrying – Madius

By *Fiqah Roslan*
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KOTA KINABALU: Understanding our roots would enable us to address some impacts of migration, especially on indigenous communities, in the increasingly borderless world we live in today.

The presence of migrants in the host country would involuntarily bring about various impacts on the local scene, where large-scale migrations in the long run could even 'weaken' the home country by decreasing or changing the make-up of its population and maybe take over businesses and job opportunities.

Opening the 'Symposium on the Origins of the Indigenous People of Sabah 2019' at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Wilfred Madius Tangau said a worst-case scenario would be the newcomers becoming new citizens who are eventually recognised as indigenous people and equally privy to the rights of the 'original' indigenous people or the host country.

"The cultural, heritage and socioeconomic impacts of migration are worrying, especially to the future existence and survival of the indigenous people in that particular host country. Understanding our genesis, heritage and culture would help us recognise the effects of migration

on indigenous people.

"In addition to indigenous languages, cultural and racial identity are equally important to be explored and discussed, particularly in the seemingly borderless world of today where the 'lines on the sand' or geographical boundaries have become blurred and the movement of goods, services, technology, information, capital flow and even people from one nation to another is becoming increasingly fluid," he said.

Madius, who is also Minister of Trade and Industries, commended UMS for featuring renowned experts in the fields of genetics, archaeology, language and culture at the symposium. This multidisciplinary approach, he said, would make the symposium a veritable source of knowledge, awareness and understanding on the origins of indigenous people of Sabah.

Moreover, Madius hoped the symposium could provide beneficial input to the State government's discussion on the amendment of the bill on Interpretation of Native Ordinance, detailing what is considered 'native' and what is not.

The bill had been discussed for a long time and Madius hoped it would be finalised soon so that it could take effect. He said the

symposium could provide useful input especially from a scientific and evidence-based standpoint, so as to produce objective results.

Meanwhile, UMS Vice-Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Yap Yun Hin said the symposium was aimed at providing important insight on the origins of the indigenous people in Sabah, as a means of promoting not only a strong sense of belonging but also to consolidate social harmony among the people of Sabah.

He further said one of the main objectives of the symposium was to ensure that research findings related to the origins of indigenous communities in Sabah are made known and accessible to the public.

"UMS has conducted various research in this area, specifically through the Biotechnology Research Institute. Research into the genetics of the local indigenous population has examined aspects of DNA, particularly among the Dusunic, Murutic and Paitanic groups.

"Although various papers related to this research project have been published locally and internationally, these findings have not been available to the Sabah population in general.

This symposium is thus one way for these important findings to be made known or published," said Dr Yap.