

# UMS receives requests to organise environmental education activities

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Environmental education activities could be expanded to include youths from more districts outside the city centre, to increase awareness of environmental conservation.

Youths should be the focus group to educate on the importance of conserving and protecting the environment, so they learn to appreciate and care for what they would inherit, said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) vice chancellor Professor Datuk Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin.

Speaking at the launch of the UMS Biodiversity Festival 2019 cum closing ceremony of the Rakan BORNEENSIS 2019 programme, Kamarudin said future generations should be educated and given awareness on environmental conservation.

This was the foundation and core of the festival, he said, which was aimed at exposing participants to knowledge and skills related to appreciation of biodiversity available here.

"We hope these environmental education activities could increase awareness among participants, on conserving our natural treasures.

"After three days of activities joined by 39 students from 12 secondary schools, nine primary schools and one home school, I can see positive development," he said.

His speech was delivered by Dean of the Faculty of Science and Natural Resources Professor Dr Baba Musta.

Kamarudin added if numbers continued to rise and there was demand, the UMS Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ITBC) through Rakan BORNEENSIS would



Dr Baba (middle) and Dr Monica with Rakan BORNEENSIS participants.

organise the programme in other districts throughout Sabah.

On expanding the role of ITBC in advocating environmental consciousness through Rakan BORNEENSIS, ITBC director Associate Professor Dr Monica Suleiman said ITBC could also consider opening a Rakan BORNEENSIS membership opportunity, so participants could register as official members.

However, she said it would require much planning and deliberation, although she agreed it would be a good move especially since the BORNEENSIS centre had been receiving positive response from the public.

"In line with its aim, the BORNEENSIS specimen collection centre is a place

of reference for scholars, researchers and practitioners from various fields. That said, we also receive requests from schools to organise environmental education activities.

"In conjunction with the Biodiversity Festival, one of the main activities was Rakan BORNEENSIS, to promote biodiversity conservation among youths.

"This was to increase knowledge and awareness among students so that they would be more inclined to care for the environment, towards sustainability. This year, 77 secondary school students participated in the activity from March 25 to 27," she said.

Open to public, the Biodiversity

Festival 2019 is the first of its kind at UMS. Apart from increasing awareness especially among youths, it is also aimed at providing a platform for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as creating interaction between the institute and the general public through engaging activities.

Apart from Rakan BORNEENSIS, the Festival also features bird watching, archery, photography workshop, 'Young Scientist at Work,' board games, BORNEENSIS Gallery open day, biodiversity talk, spelling bee, colouring contest and mascot costume contest.

There are also exhibits on biodiversity conservation from various departments and NGOs.