

Borneo's first Confucius Institute launched at UMS

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KOTA KINABALU: The newly launched Confucius Institute at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS CI) should spread its wings throughout and beyond Sabah, said Education and Innovation Minister Datuk Dr Yusof Yacob.

"Expand your wings from UMS campuses to communities across Sabah. If Sarawak needs your Mandarin language specialist services, what's wrong?" said Dr Yusof, whose speech was delivered by assistant minister Mohammad Mohamarin, at the CI UMS launching at the university's Dewan Resital here yesterday.

"We can see the future of CI UMS that is very bright in terms of Mandarin development and plays an important role in terms of relationships that benefit us all," he added.

Sabah is the first in Borneo to host a CI, an international Mandarin language institute from China.

Since CI expanded outside of China in 2004, the number has grown to 548 institutes in 154 countries globally. In Asia, 125 CIs have been established in 34 countries.

"I urge all Malaysians in Sabah to take this golden opportunity to learn Mandarin, which will surely benefit you. In addition to English, Mandarin is an important lingua-franca in the world," said the state minister.

"The development of Mandarin in the international academic, business and political world has been rapid.

"Often people say, Malaysians who speak Malay, English and Chinese, it is



Mohamarin (fifth left), Taufiq (fourth right), Liang (third left), Fu (left) and other invited guests launching the Confucius Institute at UMS yesterday.

easy for them to go to any country in this world," he said.

Dr Yusof hoped that CI UMS will not only play a role in teaching Mandarin, deepening Chinese culture and forging partnerships between UMS and universities in China, but also be integral in strengthening the Malaysia-China relations.

"This is important in terms of industry, technology and business development that benefits these two strategic partner," he said.

Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Kota Kinabalu Liang Caide said CI is an institute based on the 2,500 year-old teachings of philosopher, educator and founder of

Confucianism in China.

"Sabah is an important location in the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century. Recently, cooperation between China and Sabah has been booming.

"Chinese tourists arriving in Sabah alone this year is expected to hit a six million record, direct flights from Sabah to cities in China record 120 flights a week," said Liang.

"China's investment in Sabah is also growing, including the provision of basic facilities, housing and real estate, power generation, communications, agriculture, livestock breeding, hotels and restaurants, tourism and manufacturing.

"The Confucius Institute

establishment can be regarded as an important moment in the China-Sabah cooperation. I look forward to seeing the success of the institute," he added.

Amongst the integral people at the launch of CI, which is a 10-year-old initiative between UMS and Changsha University of Science and Technology, were UMS vice chancellor Datuk Dr Taufiq Yap Yun Hin, Changsha University of Science and Technology Party Committee secretary Professor Dr Fu Hongyuan, United Sabah Chinese Communities Association of Kota Kinabalu and Labuan, Sabah president Datuk Susan Wong Siew Guen, and CCCC Dredging (Group) Co Ltd Party Committee deputy secretary