

on 20 November 2013
Not fully explored, says don



PROF Dr Peter Songan (left) symbolically officiates at the KABOKA 7 conference witnessed by (from 2nd left) Prof Dr Ferdinand, Asso. Prof Datu Hj. Sanib b. Hj. Said and Mandarin Guntur (of Universitas Palangka Raya.) Photo courtesy of UNIMAS

KOTA SAMARAHAN: There are still many aspects in Borneo-Kalimantan that have not been fully explored , Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) Professor Dr Peter Songan said yesterday.

He said Borneo the third largest island in the world has a population of 20 million people and 20 developing cities, and from the historical aspect, Borneo had attracted the attention of world renowned figures such as Albert Russel Wallace, Joseph Conrad, Emilio Salgari who took Borneo-Kalimantan as their source of studies and writings.

"Now is a great opportunity for local scholars to explore for themselves their treasures in a more active and dynamic way," Professor Dr Peter Songan said when officiating the 7th Borneo Universities Conference (7th KABOKA) at Faculty of Social Sciences, West Campus, UNIMAS here yesterday.

With a huge area and as the world's third largest island, he said, it was quite difficult to have interaction between one another, and North Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan for example are extensive and contain almost 15 million people. And one of the best ways to have academic interaction, is by having collaboration among universities, Songan said.

He said academic collaboration proposed through exchange of post graduates, exchange of academic staff and most importantly collaboration in carrying out joint research is important for sharing expertise and facilitate coordination from the aspect of bureaucracy in doing field works.

According to him, if this joint research is done, it will be lighter than being faced with problems lies at the federal level be it in Jakarta or Kuala Lumpur.

He said realising this, UNIMAS and Universitas Palangka Raya (UNPAR) had taken the strategic step, namely by signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and it was hoped that this would lead to closer scholarship relations.

He said UNIMAS intention is to become exemplary university as well as recognised at the international level as among the institution of higher learning that becomes the main choice for students and academicians through excellent achievement in teaching, research and scholarship.

Through this strategic collaboration, it is the desire of UNIMAS to open opportunity to pre-graduate and post-graduate students as well as academic members to establish academic interaction, he said, adding the MoU will foster UNIMAS relationship with universities in Kalimantan, Indonesia, and eventually improve the profile of both the universities.

Meanwhile, Professor Dr Ferdinand, Rector of UNPAR in his speech said with the MoU, it will increase main research between the two universities and will not only improve the rating of the two universities in Asia and the world but also improve the presence of both universities in the eyes of the society.

He said UNPAR welcomed collaboration among all the universities in Borneo and UNPAR is the centre of learning for peat soil research, and it has the biggest peat soil laboratory in the world and tropical rain forest at Sabangau that the Indonesian government has made into a national park. "Therefore, we invite all peat soil researchers in Borneo to come, see and do research," he said

According to Associate Professor Datu Hj Sanid bin Hj Said , chairman of the 7th KABOKA and Director of Institute of East Asian Studies, the conference received good response with a total of 57 working papers and 120 abstracts.

Source: Sarawak Tribune