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**'Cognitive Science vital for S'wak to be competitive'**



TOKEN OF APPRECIATION: Dr Mohamad Kadim (right) presenting a memento to Fatimah.

KUCHING: Sarawak is keen to explore the potential of human cognition, specially to develop the talent and competencies of young people who will contribute to Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE), which hopefully will become South East Asia's industrial backbone.

Minister of Welfare, Women and Family Development Datuk Fatimah Abdullah, who said this, acknowledged that cognition tools, which can enhance productivity and increase the value of life and job performance and satisfaction, will be crucial to ensure the state, particularly SCORE, will be able to attract the best brains and talents from all over the world.

"Cognitive Science is an important field for Sarawak to move forward and consequently it is essential in making the country a competitive choice for industrial development in this region," she said when opening the Ninth International Conference on Cognitive Science (ICCS) organised by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) at Hilton Hotel here yesterday.

With Malaysia quickly progressing towards becoming a developed nation by 2020, she said the conference was indeed timely as a forum to deliberate on ways to achieve our national aspirations from a cognitive science perspective.

"I believe that improving human performance and productivity is vital to cope with this transformation to meet the objectives of Vision 2020. Malaysia's rapid social, economic and technological transformations have created a challenge for cognitive scientists to continuously develop human capability and potential to remain globally competitive," she added.

According to her, research into the functions, mechanisms and dynamics of human intelligence leads to innovations and technology that enhance individual work performance and thus increase productivity.

“This will lead to inventions that enable us to live better lives,” she pointed out.

The conference, co-organised with the International Association for Cognitive Science (IACS), is a platform to share ideas and latest technological advances in fields related to Cognitive Science. ICCS 2013 is based on the great success of previous ICCS conferences.

Among the key focus areas in the conference, which will end on August 30, are Cognitive Psychology, Artificial Intelligence, Intelligent System, Human Machine Interaction, Learning Sciences, Human Cognition and Development, Linguistics and Philosophy.

According to Unimas vice chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi, who also spoke, the university is always enthusiastic in the latest development of scientific innovation, science and technology.

He said they were committed to providing a platform to bring local and international researchers, experts and practitioners together to share ideas, findings and research outcomes in various aspects of higher education, and to discuss practical challenges encountered and solution adopted.

He also said cognitive science helps people to develop the potential of human brain and mind to the utmost.

“In Unimas, we offer programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in these disciplines. Since we first started offering the Bachelor of Science (Cognitive Science) programme in 1995, we have been able to learn, expand and enhance our understanding and experience on human cognitions.

“Our graduates are evidence of the growth in knowledge about cognitive science in this region, and we are proud that they are able to get employed in various industries, public and non-governmental agencies in the country and overseas,” he said.

Source: **The Borneo Post**