



DATU Haji Len Talif (third left) with Dr. Peter Songan (second left), Scott Campbell (fourth left) showing the STEMfest 2013 poster to the media yesterday.

# STEMfest 2013 to attract over 300 international delegates

**KUCHING:** STEM States Incorporated, in conjunction with International Council for Associations of Science Education and other international partners, will be hosting the inaugural 2013 International Festival of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEMfest 2013) here in partnership with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

UNIMAS has been given naming rights to STEMfest 2013. The strategic partnership with Tabung Ekonomi Gagasan Ekonomi Anak Bumiputera (TEGAS), State Education Department and Yayasan Sarawak are formalised as the conferences in STEMfest 2013 are very much in line with the State's effort through projects such as Sarawak Corridor Of Renewable Energy (SCORE). The State has moved to implement technical education initiatives which develop the workforce of tomorrow.

STEMfest 2013 will include six international conferences and meetings, and with many of the world's industry leaders coming here, there is a series of seminars, workshops, social events and side activities, which provide participants the chance to learn from the best and to network and build new relationships with international organisations.

Over 300 international delegates from over 40 countries have registered to date and they will be joined by 200 UNIMAS staff and students. TEGAS, Sarawak Education Department and Yayasan Sarawak will send 450 Malaysian educators to the conferences which include World Conference on Science and Technology Education, World Hybrid Technologies and Energy Conference, World Conference on Safety in Science, Industry and Education, International Conference on Transnational Collaboration in STEAM Education 2013 and International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) Forest and Ecosystem Science Education Special

Session.

Themed 'Smart Economic Development: Aligning Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics to a State's Future Human Resource Needs', 226 papers will be presented at the STEMfest conferences.

Meanwhile, STEMfest will be held across a series of venues, with the heart of the event being the daily workshops, seminars and exhibition taking place at UNIMAS' DeTar Putra hall.

According to a statement distributed at the media conference yesterday chaired by Assistant Minister of Technical Education Promotion, Datu Haji Len Talif Salleh who is also Chairman of TEGAS, and accompanied by STEMfest 2013 Chairman/Conference Convenor, Scott Campbell, UNIMAS Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) Dr Peter Songan and others at Wisma Sumber Alam, near here, Chief Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud will launch the event at DeTar Putra this 30 Sept at 2:30 pm.

The workshops and seminars will operate in UNIMAS from 30 Sept to 5 Oct. All delegates, it said, are invited to determine the future actions in all major areas of science, classroom practice, the intersection of science, technology and policy by developing the Kuching Declaration. These will be determined and shaped into a set of goals and actions for delegates, associations and countries to use in planning for engagement, achievement and participation in science and technology education systems and classrooms, it said.

There will be a Vice Chancellors and Presidents Forum after the launching on 30 Sept which includes Vice Chancellors from Universities in Australia, the USA, Nigeria and Malaysia. On 1 Oct evening, there will be a STEMfest Gala Dinner and Awards Night at Pullman Hotel while IUFRO field trip has been arranged at Semenggoh Wildlife Centre near here on 2 Oct, the statement

informed.

Meanwhile, two of UNIMAS' leading faculties, the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Science will be holding Open Days from 30 Sept to 1 Oct, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm daily at its DeTar Putra Convention Centre.

Students and members of the public will be free to walk around the STEMfest exhibition, discuss courses available, view posters displayed and meet with international delegates at the exhibition from UNESCO, New Zealand Science Learning Hub, University of Texas, Asia Pacific Society for Solar and Hybrid Technologies and others.

At STEMfest 2013, UNIMAS will also be presented with an international award and honoured for its commitment to the development in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It will also be presented with an 'International Award for Excellence in STEM Education and Innovation' at the STEMfest Gala Dinner at Pullman Hotel on 1 Oct.

The statement added, in recognition of the award, UNIMAS will be invited to sit on the executive committee of STEM States Incorporated for 12 months which gives Sarawak international recognition as one of the world's top STEM states who are committed to the development of STEM education and innovation. Sarawak will be recognised on the committee as being the international expert in biodiversity and forestry science.

And in recognition of this commitment and dedication by UNIMAS in supporting STEMfest, STEMfest States will also open an office in Sarawak aimed at assisting to promote Sarawak overseas to potential students from countries such as India, China and Pakistan, to support Sarawak businesses in securing export opportunities and to continue to encourage international conferences to be held in Sarawak, disclosed the statement.