Study Sabah's indigenous communities in quest to innovate food science, says CM

KOTA KINABALU: Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman tells researchers to look at the indigenous communities in Sabah in their quest for innovation in the field of food science.

He said combining scientific methods of research and traditional knowledge would also help traditional knowledge to continue to flourish.

"Indigenous communities, including here in Sabah, have developed ways to preserve game meat using fruits. Large animals are preserved for consumption at a later date in our humid, tropical weather without refrigeration."

Another area of interest for researchers is the burgeoning seaweed industry off the northern and eastern coasts of Sabah.

Investment in commercial seaweed cultivation in Sabah is valued at RM703 million to date, providing jobs to 13,000 people.

He said the state government has continued to work closely with experts from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and their partners in both upstream and downstream research to come up with sustainable solutions, the enhancement of produce value, and diversification on the usage of produce.

"Sabah has tremendous potential not just in people but also in the sustainable use of natural resources, including wild edible food items, most of which are still unknown to science. I would like to take this opportunity to invite conference participants to work with Universiti Malaysia Sabah on this journey of discovery," stated Musa.

The three-day conference attended by 311 participants from 20 countries including Australia, New Zealand, USA, the Middle East and Asean countries is jointly organised by the UMS School of Food Science and Nutrition, Malaysia Institute of Food Technology and the International Union of Food Science and Technology.

The Chief Minister also spoke on the pressing issue of global food security saying that the application of biotechnologies such as genetic engineering and functional genomics must be encouraged to produce agro-biotechnology products that increase plant and livestock productivity as well as improve agronomic traits.

He stressed that the government wants to ensure that every child and overall, every citizen, has access to nutritious and quality food in order for us to create a society that is healthy, knowledgeable and able to contribute to Malaysia's growth, said Musa. - By PAUL MU, paul@newsabahtimes.com.my

Musa (centre) receiving a memento from Dr Kamaruzaman (left).