KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has seen tremendous progress in recent years, achieving new standards of excellence across various fields on the local and international stage and has emerged a globally-respected institution for research and learning.

During his keynote address here, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Harun Abdullah highlighted the university’s resolve to consistently produce highly capable, qualified graduates while achieving the highest levels of academic excellence across various fields.

“We remain fully committed in our vision to bringing this institution to even greater heights of distinction and realization the objectives outlined in the University’s Strategic Plan 2013-2017,” he said, adding such measures would ultimately strengthen the university’s growing reputation in the regional and international stage.

Reaffirming the university’s commitment to provide international quality education, Dr. Harun noted UMS should consistently strive to enhance competitiveness and performance in order to improve its ranking among the nation’s universities and the world’s higher education institutions.

UMS has made great strides in its national and global rankings in the QS University Education Ranking (Asia) last year, moving up to 201-250 spot from 301th position back in 2013.

Nationally, Sabah’s largest university is currently ranked among the country’s top 10 universities at 9th place in the QS University Education Ranking (Malaysia) 2014, while UMS climbed to 1538th spot last year compared to 1858th position in 2013, according to the highly regarded Webometrics Ranking of World Universities.

Lauding the achievement, Dr Harun said the vast improvement in ranking is a shining reflection of the university’s quality in research, teaching and learning which is gaining growing national and international reputation.

Every year, he highlighted the university continues to move forward in producing highly qualified and skilled graduates across a diverse field of studies. At least 2082 graduates achieved a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 and above last year, with 566 graduates successfully completing their masters and 26 graduates receiving their doctorate of philosophy in 2014.

Furthermore, Dr. Harun noted the university remains committed to establishing top-quality education while opening its doors to the world in providing an enriching, holistic and vibrant campus experience for local and international students.

“We pride ourselves in providing a top-quality education for local and international students who choose to study at UMS while ensuring they receive a conducive, satisfying study and campus experience,” he said.

In a sign of the university’s internationalisation strategy, UMS currently has 617 international students from 28 countries enrolled in various fields – an increase of 101 students from 2013.

Moving forward, Dr. Harun also emphasised strengthening international collaboration which would facilitate and accelerate the invaluable exchange of expertise, knowledge and experience and top-quality staff in areas of research.

“UMS must rise to the challenge and strengthen its competitiveness in the international arena to build, retain and further improve the university’s reputation as the respected institution for research, learning and teaching,” he told over 300 lecturers and staff who attended the Vice Chancellor Speech yesterday.

Leading the initiative in enhancing international collaboration, Dr. Harun said the university is well-positioned within the highly respected global academic network which includes the International Association of Universities (IAU), Southeast and South Asia and Taiwan Universities, The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning and International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN).

Adding further, he noted UMS has also signed numerous Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) last year with Universitas Brunei Darussalam, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Universitas Nasional Jakarta, Universitas Kebangsaan Timor Leste and the Education Department of Timor Leste.

During his speech, he also noted the University has successfully improved its revenue stream from 2013 onwards, with UMSSLink Sdn Bhd earning surplus profits amounting 2,422,014 last year, a vast improvement from 2,147,796 in losses back in 2011.

Lauding the university’s extensive achievement across various fields, Dr. Harun expressed hope UMS would continue to achieve excellence and gain greater recognition on the global stage.

“We see this year provides a great opportunity for UMS to intensify efforts in carrying out the strategic plan which will put the university on the world map,” he said.
Dr. Harun (second left) speaking to reporters after giving his speech at UMS yesterday.