

# 95 per cent of fishermen out of poverty

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Programmes to uplift standards of living conducted by Federal and State government agencies have managed to help 95 per cent of families of fishermen to rise above the poverty line.

Based on the Sabah Fishermen Census of 2012, 95 per cent of the families of fishermen in the State earn a monthly income that no longer categorise them as poor as a result of taking part in the programmes.

Ko-Nelayan general manager Masood Salleh said these programmes included those implemented by Ko-Nelayan.

According to the census, traditional or artisanal fishermen with Malaysian status in 2011 numbered at 14,260 in Sabah.

This was considerably less than the annual statistics by the Sabah Fisheries Department in 2007 which reported 20,845 full-time fishermen in the State.

According to Masood, the census report on artisanal fishermen was conducted by Ko-Nelayan and Universiti Malaysia Sabah

(UMS) led by associate professor Dr Ismail Ali over a period of more than three years from November 2006 to March 2012.

He said the comprehensive census was necessary as a point of reference and guideline for the government when planning programmes to uplift the standard of living of fishermen in Sabah.

"The census has also given suggestions on improving the fishermen's lives that include their children's education, health, hygiene, environment, housing and even mindset," he added.

Following the success of the report, Masood hopes Ko-Nelayan will also be able to conduct a similar census with focus on the involvement of women in the fisheries downstream industry.

The census report was officially handed over to the chairman of Ko-Nelayan Datuk Samsudin Yahya at the Wisma Pertanian yesterday by the UMS director of Centre of Research & Innovation Management Prof Dr Felix Tongkul.

Present to witness the handing over were Ko-Nelayan deputy chairman Datuk Abdul Mijul Unaini and members of the Ko-Nelayan board of directors.



Dr Felix (fourth right) hands over the census report on fishermen to Samsuddin. Also seen are Abdul Mijul (second left), Dr Ismail (third right) and Masood (right).