

# UMS to host the first international workshop on biofuels

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is hosting the first ever International Workshop on Advances in Biofuels (IWABF2012) here for two days beginning Sept 26.

Prof. Dr Pogaku Ravindra, from UMS' School of Engineering and Information Technology, said the workshop will look at both recent trends and the outlook for the future in terms of potential Biofuels production.

He said it would also examine the benefits, Biofuels' costs and policy issues to replace petroleum fuel.

"It takes an international perspective, assessing regional similarities and differences and recent activities around the world," he said.

Pogaku said the distinguished delegates

and eminent speakers from different countries will attend the workshop.

"The salient feature is the panel discussion involving councillors from 10 countries who can play proactive role in establishing network in the field of Biofuels among their respective countries," he said.

Pogaku said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman is expected to open the gathering.

"The valedictory session will be officiated by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili on Sept 27.

UMS' Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, and the Dean of the School of Engineering and Information Technology and IWABF2012 Chairperon, Assoc. Prof. Dr Rosalam Sarbatly, will attend the workshop

along with other important personalities from the UMS, federal and state governments.

On biofuels' potential, Pogaku said Biofuels might be easier to commercialise than other alternative fuels, considering performance, infrastructures and other factors.

"Biofuels have the potential to leapfrog traditional barriers to entry because they are liquid fuels, largely compatible with current vehicles and blend-able with current fuels.

"In fact, low-percentage ethanol blends such as E10 (10 per cent ethanol by volume) are already dispensed in many service stations worldwide, with almost no incompatibility with materials and equipment," he said.

He said the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) has initiated

application of Biofuels in a big way. It is just one of the many renewable energies Nasa studied, he said.

Pogaku also said biofuels could be used in today's vehicles to reduce global petroleum consumption by 10 per cent or more.

"Biofuels can play a significant role in climate change policy and measures to reduce greenhouse gases emissions. Biofuels have become particularly intriguing because of their potential to greatly reduce carbon monoxide (CO) emissions throughout their fuel cycle.

"Virtually, the entire CO emitted by vehicles during combustion of Biofuels does not contribute to new emissions because the CO is already part of the fixed carbon cycle (absorbed by plants during growth and released during combustion)," he added.