



Dr Mohd Harun (second left) exchanging the MoU documents with Dr Minami.

UMS inks pact with Japanese varsity on food and nutrition

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on Tuesday inked another Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), this time with University of Kochi, a prestigious and well recognised public institute of higher learning in Japan.

Its Vice Chancellor, Prof. Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, said the purpose of the MoU is to explore potential cooperation between UMS and University of Kochi, especially in the area of food service and nutrition.

According to him, University of Kochi, previously known as Kochi Women's University, has five faculties and offers a curriculum that encompasses nutrition, dietetics and food service under its Faculty of Health and Nutrition.

"The UMS School of Food Science and Nutrition that was established since 1997 has produced a total of 1,381 graduates," he said, adding that 70 per cent of them have since found employment in the food industry.

Most of those employed, he said, are attached with various establishments here and in the peninsula while several are in Singapore and China.

Prior to the MoU, Dr Mohd Harun said UMS and University of Kochi had been involved in a number of researches.

"The MoU is to strengthen and form a mutually beneficial and strategic future partnership between the two universities," he said in a speech read by Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Madya Datuk Dr Kasim Md Mansur.

He said the current food industry offers many opportunities in education and research that would provide people with access to quality food, healthy diet and nutrition knowledge that support agriculture at local, national and global levels.

Through the MoU, he said, students have the opportunity at internship or industrial training via student exchange

programmes between UMS and University of Kochi. He said it is UMS' mission to produce graduates who meet the demands of the job market.

"This is in line with the vision and strategy set by the Ministry of Higher Education," he said.

He said educational institutions are responsible in imparting basic and essential knowledge to the students and therefore must work together with the parties from the private sector or industry to train and equip them with real-life practical skills.

Hence, the student exchange programme between the UMS and University of Kochi will not only provide educational enrichment but also promote a better understanding between students from Malaysia and Japan.

In addition, Dr Mohd Harun said the students would be exposed to rich culture, tradition and language of both countries.

He said exchange of academic staff or faculty is another potential area for collaboration.

He said this would serve as a platform for academicians to brainstorm ideas that would be conducive to academic career enrichment and advancement.

"This will promote effective and valuable knowledge generation, sharing and transfer between faculty of both universities."

The collaboration between the two entities, he said, would ensure more effective utilisation of individual expertise and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills.

Describing the MoU as timely, Dr Mohd Harun said its scope would cover the faculty, students and post-doctoral exchange between UMS and University of Kochi.

Signing the MoU on behalf of UMS was Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof. Madya Datuk Dr Kasim Md Mansur and University of Kochi, President Dr Hiroko Minami.