



Mohd Harun (left) presenting a copy of his book to Kamaruzaman (centre) as Mariam looks on.

Water critical for island management

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, said the destruction of water resources would lead to the destruction of an island as a whole.

He said this during his inaugural lecture which introduced his new book *"Water and Island Survival: Comprehending the Tacit Force of Nature"* at the UMS Recital Hall, here.

Prof. Mohd Harun said with its natural attraction and vibrant tourism activities, the tropical islands of Malaysia have become an important destination for local and international tourists, pointing out that this sector is one of the main contributors to the country's economic growth.

He said if the recreational development on these islands are not managed properly and wisely, the environment of the islands might be undermined, which is especially so on small islands.

"When the number of tourists increases, fresh groundwater tends to be overexploited and, thus, poses pollution threat as a result of sewage leaching," he said, citing Sipadan Island as a classic example.

He said cases like Sipadan Island provides a lesson to society of how groundwater resources were polluted due to uncontrolled tourism activities on a small island.

However, intervention by the Government in managing, resolving and rehabilitating the island has become a valuable experience and achievement to the country.

He said islands in Malaysia demand serious attention and requires studies in order to protect the islands' water resources and environment.

With an integrated, systematic and well planned approach, the optimum benefits and sustainable development of the country's tropical islands could be achieved.

Earlier in his talk, he explained that generally, groundwater on small islands faces two challenges, namely natural challenges such as climate change and sea level rise and anthropogenic challenges such as pollution and over pumping of groundwater that lead to seawater intrusion into the island's aquifer.

Also present were UMS Vice-Chancellor Professor Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon and the Centre of Postgraduate Studies Dean, Associate Professor Datin Dr Mariam Abd Latip.