

26/09/1999

Call to set up agriculture university in Sabah

KOTA KINABALU, Sat. - The Sabah Institute for Indigenous Economic Progress (Indep) today called on the Government to establish an agriculture university in Sabah.

Its executive director Wilfred Madius Tangau said the present Timbang Manggaris Agriculture Institute in Kota Belud could easily be upgraded into a university.

He was commenting on a proposal by the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations' president Professor Datuk Hamdan Adnan that an agriculture university and agriculture faculties be set up in Malaysian universities.

"The Government should consider the proposal by Fomca to establish a university that is fully devoted to teaching and research in agriculture. There is a lot of merit in the suggestion especially when it comes to food production," Tangau said.

"The university could conduct research into ways to increase the productivity of traditional farmers such as in hill padi cultivation."

Hamdan's proposal was prompted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to develop the agricultural sector to turn the country into a food producer.

Dr Mahathir had on Wednesday said his vision for Malaysia after the Multimedia Super Corridor might be agricultural development.

Tangau said it was pertinent that Dr Mahathir made direct reference to Sabah when it came to agricultural development as well as food production.

"In line with Dr Mahathir's idea, it will be logical for a university of agriculture to be located in Sabah," he said.

He said the initiative would be more meaningful if the indigenous people actively participated in modern agricultural production.

"Much work needs to be done to ensure that the indigenous people, who are still practising traditional farming, will benefit from the Government initiative to increase agricultural output," he said.

Tangau said the development and transformation of traditional farmers into modern farmers could be a way for the indigenous people to catch up with others.

"The establishment of an agriculture university in Sabah will certainly be a welcomed initiative of the Government," he said.

(END)