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UUM students to launch Earth Charter programme in campus tomorrow

SINTOK, Fri. - A group of Universiti Utara Malaysia students here will introduce the Earth Charter, which promotes the principles of peace, non-violence and respect for the environment, for the first time in Malaysia.

It will be launched on Sunday.

The four-principle charter, which was formulated in March, 2000 in Paris, is a people's treaty to inculcate an appreciation for human rights, democracy and a respect for the environment.

It was initiated in 1994 by Earth Council chairman Maurice Strong and Green Cross president Mikhael Gorbachev.

The group from UUM's Proton Campus said they were inspired to hold the campaign here after listening to the peace call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during the Iraq war.

Earth Charter programme director Chow Woon Kang said although the major thrust of the charter was towards sustainable development, its principles of peace and non-violence were relevant to the current global situation.

He said the programme was similar to the recent Peace Malaysia campaign by a group of non-governmental organisations.

"The Earth Charter programme is to promote peace as well as sustainable development, an appreciation for the environment and a respect for the world's diverse communities," said the third year tourism management student.

"We hope the public will adopt the principles of the charter as a way of life, especially its call for peace and non-violence.

"By doing this, we hope to send out a wake-up call to Malaysians and create awareness of the importance of peace."

The programme will also include a seminar on democracy and an exhibition from Aug 10 to Aug 13.

The launch will be held at the university's Sultanah Bahiyah library foyer by the university's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students Affairs) Prof Madya Mohamed Mustafa Ishak.

The exhibition will also see participation from the Department of Environment, Wildlife Department, Yayasan Penyayang and the Soka Gakkai Association.

Chow said a signature campaign would also be held and the signatures collected would be presented to the Prime Minister.

The group also wants to create awareness among school-children by extending the invitation to nearby schools, to the launch.