



Presenters from Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) in a group photo at the 9th International Islamic Borneo Conference. Picture: Courtesy of UNISSA.

# Borneo forum vows to strengthen Islam

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

MUSLIMS are not only required to eat what is halal and avoid what is haram but also to ensure the preservation of the Muslim way of life in Borneo, said the former religious affairs minister.

Pg Dato Seri Setia Dr Hj Mohammad Pg Hj Abd Rahman made the comment in his keynote address at the 9th International Islamic Borneo Conference held on September 6 and 7 at the Rattan Inn Hotel in Banjarmasin, Indonesia.

In a press statement, one of the conference's organisers, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), said the address focused on the topics of halal and haram.

Pg Dato Dr Hj Mohammad said Brunei is reinforcing Islam in the country through the promotion of religious education, da'wah, Syariah law, zakat, Islamic finance and the building of mosques.

He added that the government continues to promote the Malay Muslim Monarchy philosophy and implements ideals and efforts to ensure that Brunei achieves the goal of becoming a Zikir Nation — a country that is guided by the teachings of Islam and Allah in all aspects.

The conference carried the theme 'Melestari Halal dan Memperkasa Dakwah di Borneo' (Making Halal Sustainable and Em-

powering Da'wah in Borneo).

Among the objectives of the conference was to gather academic papers and materials related to the subjects of 'halal' and 'da'wah' in Borneo to be used for future reference. The conference also conducted a forum for the discussion of these topics and other related issues.

During the conference, 76 papers were presented at a seminar by members of higher education institutions all over Borneo. There were also keynote speeches by the Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, the Mufti of Sarawak and the Mufti of Sabah.

The conference concluded with a resolution that Borneo is to strengthen Islamic brotherhood, empower Islamic education and highlight the importance of an Islamic economy.

The conference's executive committee also agreed to hold a 10th conference next year at Universitas Mulawarman in Indonesia's East Kalimantan province.

The conference was jointly organised by Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia; Universiti Teknologi Mara Sarawak; Universiti Teknologi Mara Sabah; UNISSA; Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College; and Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda, Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia. — Julius Hong

The Brunei Times

# EducationUSA looks to draw in more Bruneians

Sally Piri  
BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

THE US Embassy's academic advising office, EducationUSA, will strengthen its education outreach programme by carrying out interactive sessions with stakeholders to encourage more Bruneian students to study in American varsities.

US Embassy Public Affairs Officer Catherine Muller said that the programme allows the embassy to inform teachers, counsellors, other educational institutions, students and parents about the various options in the US as there are over 4,000 accredited education institutions in the country.

Muller was speaking on the sidelines of the annual EducationUSA Interactive Session for career teachers and school counsellors yesterday.

"We will continue doing that and we will see if more students go," said the public affairs officer.

"We always hope that we will increase (the number of Bruneians studying in the US) again next year," she added.

The public affairs officer expressed hopes that more students will find the education programmes in the US to be the best fit for their needs, educational goals and career goals.

She said that for the 2014-2015 academic

year, the number of Bruneian students studying in the US increased by 21.7 per cent, compared to the prior year.

"This interactive session is a great opportunity for US Embassy Brunei Darussalam to engage with career teachers who inform parents and students about universities and trends in US higher education... and guide them through the admissions process, procedures, and testing," she said.

Yesterday's programme, held at the Radisson Hotel in the capital, saw a presentation which touched on the undergraduate application process, the SAT (a standardised test used for admission to US colleges/universities) and the common application.

The presentation was delivered by EducationUSA Advisor Mayra Robles.

During the event, Ummi Kalsum Hj Omar, head of pre-university and careers department at Sayyidina Ali Secondary School shared her experience in the US during a three-week workshop and conference with the International Association of College Admission Counselling (IACAC).

Ummi Kalsum is Brunei's first scholar and participant at the IACAC.

The event was attended by higher education career teachers and counsellors from various government and private sixth form centres and secondary schools.

The Brunei Times



Some of the participants at the annual EducationUSA Interactive Session for career teachers and school counsellors at Radisson Hotel in the capital yesterday. Picture: BT/ Sally Piri

# ICI holders can still apply for visas for the Philippines

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

BRUNEI International Certificate of Identity (ICI) holders who wish to apply for visas at the Philippine Embassy can still be issued visas as the Brunei ICI is machine readable.

This was confirmed by the Philippine Embassy here yesterday.

"As Brunei International Certificate of Identity (ICI) is machine readable, holders of ICIs may still be issued Philippine visas," said Melvin C Almonguera, the embassy's consul.

Last month the embassy, through its official website at [www.pebrunei.org](http://www.pebrunei.org), announced that they will no longer accept non-machine readable passports or travel documents for visa applicants when filing their applications.

This will take into effect starting from Oc-

tober 1.

The website said that this applies to all types of non-machine readable passports/travel documents including ordinary, official, diplomatic, and/or service documents, except for temporary travel documents designed for emergency situations.

Almonguera said that the recent announcement, which was issued on August 16, is in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) guidelines on the phasing-out of non-machine readable passports/travel documents.

The matter on the non-issuance of Philippine visas has been a concern among some of the ICI holders.

ICI is a travel document issued for Bruneiborn permanent residents who are stateless or do not have citizenship status.

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