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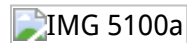
WCM2016: MALACOLOGISTS OF THE WORLD TO CONVENE IN MALAYSIA



PENANG, 4 June 2015 - World renowned scientists in the field of malacology (the study of snails and shellfish) will gather in Malaysia to discuss issues on conservation of molluscs (shell-covered organisms) that are increasingly threatened with extinction.

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) lecturer, Associate Professor Dr. Aileen Tan Shau Hwai stated that it is necessary for all parties to be involved in the conservation and preservation of these endangered species.

She said that there was a marked decrease in the number of shellfish in waters around the world, including in this country as a result of various factors including climate change which has led to a decline in their breeding.



Although shellfish is generally not as popular as other forms of sea-life including fish and prawns, it nevertheless contributes 60 percent to the country's fishery resources, she added.

"This is worth noting, since it is critically important to raise awareness of the need to preserve this alternative source of protein in view of the current threats to biodiversity.

"We hope that with a network of international co-operation, scientists in this country can seek out the best measures to ensure that breeding grounds for these shelled organisms are conserved as a source of income generation for the country's economy," she said.

Aileen, who has created history by becoming the first woman scientist elected as the President of the world renowned UNITAS Malacology (UM) since its inception in 1962, revealed the above facts in a press conference called to publicise Malaysia's hosting of the 19th World Congress of Malacology 2016 (WCM2016) in Penang next year, from 18-24 July 2016.

Formerly based in Europe, UM has attracted global attention through its study of molluscs and also for its worldwide championing of issues related to preservation, conservation and biodiversity of such species.

The congress which hopes to attract some 400 participants from more than 40 countries will present an opportunity for local scientists to establish networking linkages with other researchers from around the world specialising in malacology, and to collaborate in high-impact research.

It will also serve as a platform to showcase the potential of young researchers from all over the world for the development and advancement of research in molluscs.



"UM would like to urge young scientists in the field of malacology to seize the opportunity to take part in the congress and join in the discussion," she said, adding that interested scientists from around the world, especially from the Asian region can obtain further information from the WCM2016 website <http://wcm2016.usm.my> (<http://wcm2016.usm.my>).

The congress website was officially launched today by the Dean of the School of Biological Sciences, USM, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Sofiman Othman. Also present today were members of the UM Council Members (2013-2016) namely Jesus Souza Troncoso (Spain), Julia Sigwart (Ireland) and Hiroshi Saito (Japan). - Translation: Dr Nurul Farhana Low Abdullah/Text: Marziana Mohamed Alias/Photos: Mohd. Fairus Md. Isa



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