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Best Women Inventor's Special Award at ITEX 2010

Universiti Malaysia Pahang's (UMP) Dr Mimi Sakinah Abdul Munaim was the university's first female researcher to be honored with a Special Award at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Best Women Inventor, held concurrently during the 21st International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition 2010 (ITEX 2010) at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on May 14-16.

Dr Mimi Sakinah won the award through her project "Sustainable Production of Sorbitol from Biomass Using Green Technology Approach". The lecturer from UMP's Faculty of Chemical Engineering & Natural Resources (FKKSA) also won a gold medal through another research product – which is capable of generating sorbitol from sawdust.

UMP also coveted two more gold medals at the exhibition through Dr Zularisam Abdul Wahid's "Development of Clean Renewable Fuel from Wastewater towards a Sustainable Energy Source Using Green Technology Approach: HEC²"; and Norashikin Mat Zain's "Novel Green, Economical and Environmentally Friendly Biodegradable Composite Films from Caladium". Both researchers hailed from the same faculty as Dr Mimi Sakinah's.

Dr Zularisam research product is capable of producing gas from wastewater using solar energy while Norashikin's uses processed sweet potato to produce bio-degradable plastic bag.

ITEX 2010 saw a 100 percent success for UMP's eight research products when the university took home three gold medals and five silver.

Research products from UMP's Faculty of Civil Engineering & Earth Resources (FKASA) took home three of the five silver medals through Dr Anwar Ahmad's "Activated Sludge Biomass to Remove Pollutants from Wastewater"; Youventharan Duraisamy's "Peat Sampler with Built-In Extruder (PEATER)"; and Associate Professor Dr Abdurahman Hamid Nour's "A Novel Process of Membrane Anaerobic System in Treating Palm Oil Mill Effluent".

The other two silver medals were Rohana Abdul Karim's "Pineapple Maturity Inspection Using Colour Identification" from the Faculty of Electrical & Electronic Engineering; and Associate Professor Dr Hayder A Abdul Bari's "Formulation of New Drag Reducing Agent Using Natural Mucilage Extracted from Hibiscus Rosa-sinensis Linn Leaves" from FKKSA.

At the exhibition, UMP's booth also took the spotlight, winning



second place in the Best Exhibition Booth competition, in the category of "54 square feet & above".

UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr Daing Mohd Nasir Daing Ibrahim, lauded the prestigious award and medals conferred on the university, and hoped that these achievements would further inspire UMP's lecturers to continue producing research products, which could be commercialized for the benefit of all.

At the official opening of ITEX 2010, Minister of Science, Technology & Innovation (MOSTI), Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili, said, "Malaysia has to focus on holistic innovation to help boost the country's economy to a higher level."

"There is neither an ending nor a limit to how much we can innovate, and the opportunities are abundant for our citizens to be creative and innovative," the minister said.

"Our country depends on the contributions of her citizens to achieve the aspiration to turn Malaysia into a high-income economy," he added.

"Under the 9th Malaysia Plan, the Government has allocated a sum of RM2.889 billion to implement 4,300 projects with emphasis in research and development, as well as technology and innovation."

"MOSTI itself has set aside several funds to develop ideas and inventions, and to date, has received 10,375 applications," Datuk Dr Maximus said.

ITEX 2010 saw 30 percent local participation from 50 organizations, comprising institutions of higher learning, research institutions, corporations and private individuals, covering an exhibition of 673 inventions in 24 categories. Themed "Creativity: The Road to Innovative Economy", this year's ITEX also saw participation of researchers from Hong Kong, Iran, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.