

Counting on research grants from other nations

UNIVERSITI Putra Malaysia will work on obtaining their research grants from other countries this year, said its vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris.

She said the allocation for grants in the country was fewer this year compared to previous years but added that many nations have opened their grants for varsities abroad to apply.

Prof Aini explained that the grants available overseas focused on agriculture and food security. UPM, she said would take advantage of the “offer” since much of its research was focused on agriculture.

The total amount of international research grants UPM obtained last year was RM11mil, compared to RM300,000 in 2014.

She was speaking at a press conference to address her plans for the to propel the university forward on Tuesday.

On the claim by the National Council of Professors (MPN) that the contracts of 156 professors in public universities would not be renewed because of budget cuts by the Government, Prof Aini said that “UPM will retain all our excellent professors”.

She explained that the university will not



New focus: The university will work towards becoming a recognised global centre on food security, says Prof Aini.

let its professors go so easily, adding that as long as they continue to contribute to the university, the varsity will find the funds to help them continue their service.

In speaking about the uncertain economic times, Prof Aini said that the university will be looking at ways to generate its own income, including the commercialisation of products and ideas through consultancy and training.

She cited an example of how a percentage of the profits from UPM Holdings went to the university last year.

UPM Holdings is a company under the varsity.

She said that she hoped the company would be able to double its profits this year, so that it could financially help out the university. Meanwhile, UPM is also looking to develop a National Food Security Centre in the near future.

While the details are still in discussion, Prof Aini said it was an important aspect. With more focus and effort, she said that UPM could become a recognised global centre on food security. – *By YASMIN AHMAD KAMIL*