

in Islamic institutions in Malaysia, none of which (she claimed) can boast of female leadership. However, in 2010, three women were appointed as Shariah court judges. Although an earlier state fatwa in Terengganu (1986) declared it impermissible, the National Fatwa Council (2006) allowed it. Women leadership faces further challenges such as cultural stereotypes, balancing work and home, and creating a work environment conducive to women's safety and growth.

**National Geoscience Conference 2014:
'Climate and Sea Level Change Through Geologic Time'
(13-14 June 2014, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia)**

Daud AbdulFattah Batchelor, IAIS Malaysia

The 27th National Geoscience Conference held in Kuala Terengganu on 13-14 June, and co-organised by Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and the Malaysian Minerals & Geoscience Department, was attended by 200 participants. The potential effects of ongoing climatic and sea level changes are of global concern, especially for countries with coastal populations. The most recent geologic period, the Quaternary (0 to 2.6 million years ago), is characterised by high frequency climate and sea level changes. The conference focussed on understanding these changes to facilitate prediction of future coastal trends. In addition to the conference theme there were sessions on geohazards, engineering geology, geochemistry, hydrogeology and economic geology. The conference was opened by Professor Datuk Ibrahim Komoo, UMT Vice Chancellor, who emphasised that geoscientists have a leading role in contributing towards understanding past environmental changes. The well-known geological truism that "The Present is the Key to the Past", needs to be joined with one that "The Past is the Key to the Future". Geologists understand past climatic changes well and so are ideally positioned to assist with future predictions.

Professor Fredolin Tangang, Vice Chair of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Working Group I, highlighted recently published IPCC findings that human-induced impacts are without doubt the dominant factor for increased greenhouse gas concentrations, global warming of the atmosphere and ocean (0.1°C per decade since 1971), diminishing ice and snow, and rising sea levels (17 mm per decade since 1901). General predictions are for a more rapid rise of temperatures and sea levels unless more is done to cap anthropogenic carbon dioxide and methane emissions. Dr Daud Batchelor in his Keynote Address provided an overview of the stratigraphy, climates, sea levels and environments experienced over the past 3.0 million years in the (currently) drowned Sundaland

Continent and Peninsular Malaysia, and called for updated interpretations and revisions of the key stratigraphic units. The conference was an opportunity to meet old hands, Emeritus Professor H.D. Tjia, Dr John Kuna Raj and Tan Boon Kong. The healthy state of the geoscience fraternity was reflected in the large number of papers and posters delivered by young researchers. It was surprising to hear that Universiti Teknologi Petronas has arguably the largest Geosciences department in the world with over 400 students. The conference was closed by the newly appointed President of the Geological Society of Malaysia, Dr Mazlan Madon, who is also Chief Geoscientist of PETRONAS (Malaysia's national oil company) and Malaysia's representative to the UN Commission on Limits of the Continental Shelf.