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Collective push for circular economy

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One for the album: (From left) Gobinathan, UCSI Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment academic Prof Datuk Dr Ahmad Ibrahim, Prof Rofina Yasmin, Mohd Nor Azman, Prof Siti Hamisah, and UCSI deputy vice-chancellors Distinguished Prof Dr Phang Siew Moi (research and postgraduate studies) and Prof Datuk Dr Rohana Yusof (academic and internationalisation) at the forum.

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MALAYSIA'S push towards a circular economy will fall short without stronger, more structured collaboration among government, industry and academia, said experts at a forum hosted by UCSI University.

Themed "Malaysia Towards a Circular Economy: The Critical Role of Research and Technology", the forum brought together leaders from the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti), the Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (Mranti) and the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM).

A recurring point during the discussion was the need to break down silos between the public and private sectors.

"We have to co-create. We cannot just leave industry, the private sector and institutions on their own," said Mosti deputy secretary-general Datuk Dr Mohd Nor Azman Hassan in his keynote address on May 29.

To support this, the government launched the National Fund-of-Funds under Khazanah Nasional Bhd – a RM1bil initiative to help venture capital firms invest in local startups, and foster deeper

collaboration among researchers, entrepreneurs and industry players.

The Mosti representative added that Mranti has been appointed to work closely with Technology Transfer Offices at research universities to help bring innovations to maturity and connect them with potential industry partners.

Mranti chairperson Prof Rofina Yasmin Othman said, "We're encouraging universities to have permanent technology transfers. We're working with public service departments to recognise innovation managers."

FMM Environmental Management and Circular Economy Committee vice-chair Gobinathan Kumaran Nair urged universities to proactively engage industry, with the government acting as a facilitator.

UCSI vice-chancellor Emerita Prof Datuk Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir said collective strength could accelerate Malaysia's shift to a circular economy.

The event marked the first instalment of the UCSI Grand Challenges Forum Series – a platform to spark critical dialogue and drive action on national and global priorities.