

26 AUG 1996

Fong-China

MALAYSIA TO FORM PARTNERSHIP WITH FAR EAST COLLEGES

BEIJING, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is seeking to promote cooperation through partnership with private colleges in the Far East and has proposed that other countries in the region initiate similar arrangements.

"If we are committed to foster closer partnership with Asian institutions, the trend towards Western education can be slowly reversed," Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn told a Malaysia-China dialogue here today.

He said any form of cooperation between the private institutions of these (Far East) countries would greatly help to expedite the process.

Dr Fong said this when delivering his paper on "Asia: The Centre of Educational Excellence Partnering Towards the 21st Century" at the Malaysia-China Partnership: The Beijing Dialogue.

Earlier, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad delivered his keynote address at the opening of the dialogue at the China World Hotel here. A total of 700 people, including 250 Malaysian businessmen, are attending the two-day dialogue.

Dr Fong said that while Western countries continued to be the main centres for those seeking academic excellence, Asian countries could look more towards cooperation in the area of technical and vocational training.

He said the transformation of Asian countries towards greater industrialisation called for an increase in the supply of engineers, technical and managerial personnel and highly skilled manpower.

"This is a potential area for increased cooperation that we in Asia can explore," he said, adding that the growing interest in the Japanese and Mandarin languages might well be an impetus to encourage more regional linkages and partnership in education.

Dr Fong said the rise of the Far East as an economic powerhouse and the growing popularity of Asian languages, encouraged by much greater inter-Far East travel and foreign investments, might well be the launch pad for increased cooperation in education in future.

Dr Fong also spoke at length on Malaysia's bid to become a centre of educational excellence.

He said that apart from providing logistical support, including the launch of the Multimedia Super Corridor, Malaysia was also determined to ensure that quality was not compromised at the expense of quantity.

And in a move to facilitate the entry of foreign students, the Education Ministry had empowered private colleges to issue letters of support to foreign students to obtain student visas, Dr Fong added. --

BERNAMA

ES JK