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Smart-Education

EDUCATION SIGNIFICANT IN ENHANCING FDI's, SAYS SITI HASMAH

By: Mikhail Raj Abdullah

KAMPALA, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- Recognising the significance of education in enhancing foreign direct investments (FDIs), Malaysia is accelerating efforts to increase its people's ability to absorb technology transfer and participate actively in its industrialisation, said Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali.

"Educational changes and reforms in Malaysia are not incidental but carefully planned and thought of and are made in line with the changing needs of society," the prime minister's wife said during deliberations of the Social Issues Group at the Global 2001 Smart Partnership International Dialogue at the Speke Resort in Munyonyo Village, some 15km from here, Monday.

Also present at the discussions was Uganda's First Lady Janet Museveni who was hosting the session.

In relating Malaysia's experience, Dr Siti Hasmah said colleges, universities and other higher educational institutions were geared towards developing competent, disciplined and highly skilled workforce with strong ethical and moral values and commitment to excel.

"Malaysians are being equipped with a strong base in education and training, and to possess a range of generic skills which include communication abilities," she told the mostly African audience.

Dr Siti Hasmah said that to meet the requirements of the knowledge-based economy, the education and training system were reoriented to be more effective in imparting skills as well as focus on areas required by the economy.

She also said that the government was giving priority to provide knowledge on information and communication technology (ICT) to the younger generation so that they would be fully prepared to handle the technological and communication explosion in future.

Besides this, she said, efforts were underway to strengthen women's access to ICT whereby formal and non-formal training in areas such as computer literacy and applications of ICT were conducted jointly by the government and non-governmental organisations with special emphasis on rural areas.

Dr Siti Hasmah said that education and health were also important to a society's propensity to attract FDI's.

Having visited the Islamic Medical Association here, she said she was impressed with the work done by its chairman, Dr Magid Kagimu Salongo, in providing medical education in efforts to curb the incidence of AIDS especially among Muslims in the African country.

Dr Siti Hasmah said Dr Salongo undertook the campaign to educate Muslims against AIDS as a "jihad" (holy war) by getting imams involved in the programme.

She said the association had invited Malaysia to send medical officers to an international conference in November here on AIDS so that they could impart some knowledge through training to the locals.

Dr Salongo, she said, had asked her to urge Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to impress upon members countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to take part in the work done by the association.

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