

DATE: 19/02/2008

PM: The young are our assets

NST-19/2/2008

KUALA LUMPUR: Young people need to be given chances to become valuable assets for the country, the prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said that everyone had to be aware that all young people, even those "with problems", had potential.

"What we need to do is to give them good chances, that are of quality, so that they can be the energy of the future," he said.

"We do not want them to be a liability to the country. Instead they should be assets of value and worth," said Abdullah, who was speaking at the launching of the SEGi College flagship campus in Kota Damansara yesterday.

Abdullah encouraged the private sector to provide education opportunities to the young, complementing the facilities provided by the government.

"Our young people of today need more chances for education and training than before to build up skills that will prepare them for the job market."

Abdullah stressed the importance of acquiring knowledge as a basis for building up the country's human capital, saying that the strength of a nation was not in its state-of-the-art infrastructure but in its educated and knowledgeable society.

"This is the real strength that we must develop. If we have this strength, all else will follow and we can have it all," he said.

Citing less developed countries as being backward because they lacked a learned society, Abdullah said that education encouraged innovation and creativity.

Abdullah also highlighted SEGi College's participation in Putera Umno's Second Chance Programme, targeted at those aged between 18 and 25, especially in the rural areas who did not have the opportunity to pursue their education. With the programme, young people will be given a "second chance" to obtain academic qualifications and vocational skills.

Abdullah said about 8,000 students were benefiting from the programme.

The Kota Damansara campus is situated on a 10-acre site, with a capacity of educating 12,000 students at once. —

By Nisha Sabanayagam

