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Deputy Prime Minister **Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin**, flanked by wife **Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman** (left) and Unesco director-general **Irena Bokova** (right), being greeted by **Orang Asli from Pos Betau, Pahang**, at the Unesco Day celebration at Dataran Merdeka yesterday. Pic by Khairull Azry Bidin

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'Yes' to peace and togetherness

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has taken the lead in being the first to launch the national chapter of the Youth for Education, Sustainability and Peace (YESPeace) network, a platform for young people to voice their opinions and ideas for global peace and sustainable development.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the network, was a global youth undertaking pioneered by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) initiative.

"Malaysia is the first country chosen to launch the YESPeace network. It provides the best platform for young people to share ideas and work together on issues related to peace and sustainable development," he said at Unesco Day 2015 in Dataran Merdeka here yesterday.

Muhyiddin and Unesco director-

general Irena Bokova launched the YESPeace national chapter.

He said this year's Unesco Day celebration focus on the youth and its theme "Togetherness" was timely as there was a critical need for people to unite in the face of increasing global threats.

"The theme supports Unesco's continuous efforts to educate the global society for understanding of diversity and how to live together in peace and harmony."

He said Unesco also placed importance on youth empowerment through the Unesco Youth Programme. This, he said, matched the aim of the country, which was committed to work with Unesco to strengthen and push forward the role of youth.

"It is to ensure that together, youth can spearhead change and social innovation, build and help local community, eradicate poverty and inequality, as well as cultivate the culture of peace."

Muhyiddin said Malaysia would not have been able to progress from a commodity-based to a manufacturing and knowledge-based economy without unity.

"This means that the common bond of being Malaysian binds us together irrespective of race, religion and socio-economic status."

Bokova, in her speech, said the idea of togetherness was a powerful one, especially during a time when extremism had overpowered some places in the world and divided society.

"I believe the idea of togetherness has never been more powerful, as we see, unfortunately in some cases of the world, extremism trying to tear apart society, to divide us and to (make us) think that cultural diversity is a weakness and not a strength," she said.

Present were Muhyiddin's wife, Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman, and Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh.