

**Vocational Education Needs Major And Immediate Change, Muhyiddin
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BANGI, Jan 6 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today expressed concern that Malaysia may not become a competitive nation and continue to lag behind if there is no major and immediate change in vocational education.

Taking into consideration the current developments in the developed nations and region, the Deputy Prime Minister said the nation's success should be gauged not only in terms of achievements in the academic field because the new definition for success was technical and vocational progress.

"The most challenging task is to produce a work force that can meet the needs of local industry, that is, at least 3.3 million skilled workers within the next 10 years," he said when launching the Vocational Education Transformation, at the German-Malaysian Institute, Bangi Friday.

Also present were Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, Higher Education Minister Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Human Resource Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong and the Director-General of Education, Datuk Seri Abd Ghafar Mahmud.

Muhyiddin, who is also the Education Minister, said the growth of the national economy demanded an increase in the number of graduands in the technical and vocational fields.

He said the government had taken proactive measures since 2009 by looking at the implementation of technical and vocational education in developed nations and countries in the region.

He said the average enrolment of students for the technical and vocational streams at the upper secondary level for member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was 44 per cent compared with 10 per cent in Malaysia.

"If we look at the developed countries, technical and vocational education is considered as a major strength in the education system of all these countries.

"For example in Germany, Finland and Austria, between 50 and 80 per cent of their students take up vocational education at the upper secondary level on a full-time programme (4-5 years) and the apprenticeship programme," he said.

Thus, Muhyiddin said vocational education in the country was also heading toward the concept of education for all as was outlined by UNESCO.

Meanwhile, the Basic Vocational Education (PAV) programme was also formulated to provide an alternative to students keen on education that was hands-on and work-based in nature right from the lower secondary level up to the level of the vocational college or public and private skills training institutes.

He said in order to intensify vocational education transformation, 15 secondary vocational schools in each state had been upgraded to become pioneer vocational colleges this year.

"With this transformation, the vocational stream can no longer be regarded as second class education because students who went through such education would become skilled workers and highly marketable," he said.

Muhyiddin said the transformation of vocational education was carried out through five strategies namely the transformation of the vocational education curriculum; the transformation of the vocational education institutions; collaboration with strategic partners in the industry; transformation of the vocational education assessment; and transformation of the vocational education organisation.

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