

**Malaysia-China Youth Exchange Programme Opens New Era - Ahmad Shabery
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By Ng Che Yean**

BEIJING, April 21 (Bernama) -- The Malaysia-China youth exchange programme has opened a new era between the two countries, said Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek.

He said the 10-day programme, which started on Wednesday, would strengthen ties between Malaysia and China.

The initiative, which was agreed to by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his Chinese counterpart, Wen Jiabao when they met in April last year, would enable youth representatives between the two countries to forge friendship, Ahmad Shabery said at a reception in honour of 100 Malaysian youths involved in the programme here Saturday.

He hoped the youths aged between 18 and 29, who were selected for the tour, would study China from a different perspective, particularly the spirit and endeavour of its people in changing the economic landscape of the country.

Meanwhile, speaking at the reception, Malaysian Ambassador to China Datuk Iskandar Sarudin said the youths involved in the programme could play a significant role in enhancing ties between Malaysia and China.

He said the youth representatives selected for the tour were very fortunate to be able to explore the Chinese culture and tradition, one of the world's oldest and most complex.

"As the Great Wall of China is a symbol of the endurance of the human spirit and Chinese national identity, you should foster great appreciation of the spirit in defending the sovereignty and rights of our country.

"For the Chinese people, this tradition is embodied till today to raise the spirit of the people for the love of the country and its leaders, and in defence of the national sovereignty," he added.

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