

**Rosmah Calls For Nurturing Human Capital From Young  
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By M. Saraswathi**

BANGALORE, July 12 (Bernama) -- Human capital is the pillar of a country's future and, thus, it is paramount to start nurturing it from young and aligning it with the needs of the nation, businesses and industries, said Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, wife of the Malaysian prime minister.

"We cannot keep producing throngs of scientists when the vacuum is in finance and economics, for instance. Even as there may be a common script of what good talent should be, this script must match the realities of our own countries," she said.

If the development of talents does not match the nation's requirements, it would result in severe shortages in pivotal sectors and losing talents to other countries, she said.

"The pressure to develop the right kind of talent for the right time has become more imminent now," Rosmah said in her keynote address on "Developing Talents for the Future," at the Asia HRD (Human Resource Development) Congress Awards 2012, here.

Also present were former Philippine President Gen (Rtd) Fidel V. Ramos, United Arab Emirates' Minister for Foreign Trade Sheikha Lubna Khalid and Malaysia's High Commissioner to India Datuk Tan Seng Sung.

Rosmah said good talents must also be complemented with ethics, discipline and a good value system.

"Our challenge and opportunity, therefore, is to nurture talented people who possess good values and ethics such that they are able to utilise and deploy their gifts for the betterment of humanity," she said.

Hence, developing and nurturing the minds of the future is just as important, if not more, than infrastructure development, especially investment in early childhood education, she said.

Rosmah cited the Permata Project, which focuses on early childhood education and care, as among the steps taken by Malaysia in developing its future talents.

"Early childhood is the most critical period in human development, and 85 per cent of a person's intellect, personality and social skills are developed in the first five years of life.

"Children who have quality early childhood education are said to have a better life trajectory. They are not only more successful in the early years but will also be better individuals in their later life," she said.

The Permata Project, started in 2007, has developed into more than 600 Permata childcare centres in Malaysia and assisted in the development of some 25,000 children from rural areas and the urban poor, irrespective of their religion, race and culture, she said.

Rosmah said the quality of the education system is another important feature in preparing to address the needs of a future society characterised by rapid technological development and a complex environment.

The education system must place emphasis on science and technology, humanities including multilingual competency, as well as include learning in diverse communities, locally and internationally, both physical and virtual, she said.

The system must help students to learn and think critically, creatively as well as enable them to communicate their decisions well, horizontally, and vertically, she said.

"These are critical skills for future leaders to possess."

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