

**Najib Says Malaysian Companies Should Partner With More Japanese SMEs**  
**Bernama**  
**October 10, 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak wants to see Malaysian companies working with more Japanese small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in efforts to move the country's economy forward.

Najib said he hoped to see Japanese SMEs cooperating with Malaysian firms in specialist areas such as green technology, key technical services and other high value-added sectors.

"These strategic partnerships will contribute towards our transition to an innovation and knowledge-driven economy and help strengthen the backbone of our economy," he said in his keynote address at the "Look East Policy - A New Dimension and Majeca-Jameca 31st Joint Conference" here today.

The prime minister said skills acquisition, knowledge and values were central to the success of the Look East Policy.

"So let's apply them further by widening the net. I am particularly fired up by the idea of getting more SMEs involved," he said.

He said under the Economic Transformation Programme, the government was focusing on industries related to environment management to energy saving and green technologies in moving into higher technology and knowledge-driven industries.

"We have identified growth prospects in healthcare, education and tourism and these are some indicators of our priorities in the years ahead.

"So, we need to construct a Look East programme that addresses these needs," he said.

Najib also hoped the future of the Look East Policy programmes should be more targeted and more closely linked to specific outcomes.

"We should concentrate on building not just stronger graduates but also stronger institutions. "That is the key to a truly lasting partnership, which is why I was pleased to see the establishment of the Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology last year," he said.

Najib said the institute would give Malaysia the opportunity to experience the unique industrial environment made possible by close cooperation between the Japanese academia and business.

"It will encourage more Japanese companies to invest and I sincerely hope it will inspire more Japanese universities to set up branch campuses here too," he said.

Last year, Japanese investments in the Malaysian manufacturing sector were the highest since 1980, touching US\$3.2 billion, he said.

Meanwhile, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said his government intends to enhance cooperation by utilising Japan's state-of-art technologies in specific areas such as infrastructure development.

In addition, Noda said, Japan has started issuing Multiple Entry Visa for short-term stay for Malaysians valid for three years since last September and expects further active exchange of people between the two countries.

He said Malaysia accorded great importance on high quality human capacity building and investment in new economic areas such as green technology and high technology in its aim to become a high-income nation by 2020 under the leadership of Najib.

"I am pleased to say that Japan is willing to enhance concrete cooperation with Malaysia to support the policies," he added.

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