

**University Ranking Always Given Attention, Says Muhyiddin
Bernama
12 Sept, 2013
From Abdul Aziz Harun**

LONDON, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- The Education Ministry always monitors the rankings of the universities in the country, to see if they can be assisted in improving their position to be among the best universities in the world.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said, however, fluctuations in the ranking list were normal, and the position of a particular university should not be looked at during a particular period only but should be looked at in the medium and long-term.

Muhyiddin, who is also the Education Minister, said the universities should make their own analyses to look at the factors that contributed to the drop in their rankings if this happened, and if they had identified the factors, intervening measures could probably be taken by the government to improve their rankings.

"This is nothing new, in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) which was launched recently, among the targets is to see an improvement in the rankings of the universities in the country," he told a group of Malaysian journalists covering his working visit to the United Kingdom, Wednesday.

He disclosed this when commenting on the rankings of world universities released by the QS World University Rankings recently which showed that the rankings of Malaysian public universities generally continued to drop with only the University of Malaya (UM) remaining in the group of 200 top universities in the world this year.

Only seven Malaysian universities are in the group of 800, and only Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) showed a slight improvement from the 358th position in 2012 to 355th this year.

Muhyiddin said that at the same time, other countries were also relentless in their efforts to improve the performance of their own universities, and some of them had even greater resources, while some of these universities had been in operation for hundreds of years.

"Although the ranking is important to gauge our benchmark, I don't want to see the university managements being too engrossed over the ranking, otherwise there will be side effects.

"For example, only the best students would be taken in by the universities, while those less outstanding might not be considered for fear that they would affect the rankings of the universities concerned," he said.

He said the situation in Malaysia was slightly different compared to the other countries when the universities also considered the question of social justice as well as other objectives in acknowledging the importance of the ranking aspect.

He said Malaysia must take into consideration the socio-economic objective, by assisting to provide opportunities and space for less outstanding students to be admitted into the universities if the admission into the centres of higher learning could improve their achievements.

In addition, Muhyiddin said that in his meetings with Vice-Chancellors of universities in the country recently, he had suggested that they provide a specific plan to submit proposals on how they could have autonomy in the financial and other aspects, and how the resources that they obtained could be utilised to improve the position of the universities in the long term.

"I am now compiling them, and subsequently we will sit down with every university as well as discuss how the plans could be implemented," he added.

--BERNAMA

Copyright © 2013 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=977101>