

UNESCO Members Benefit From Malaysia-Initiated Fund - Muhyiddin

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From Abdul Muin Majid

PARIS, April 14 (Bernama) -- Projects worth more than US\$5 million (RM18.4 million) have been approved over a period of two years under the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Fund initiated by Malaysia, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said they comprised 17 projects focusing on Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries, Africa and South-South Cooperation.

The initiative, he said, was taken as Kuala Lumpur believed that UNESCO, or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, needed support from all its members.

"UNESCO is an organisation that we're very proud to be associated with since our membership in 1958. Our cooperation and collaboration with UNESCO has increased over the years, with significant outcomes," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is on a three-day working visit to Paris, was speaking at a dinner with permanent delegates of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to UNESCO in the French capital Monday night.

The Malaysian deputy prime minister said some of the highlights of the projects would be shared at the next UNESCO General Conference in November.

Muhyiddin, who is also Education Minister, described both UNESCO and the OIC as valuable and special because Malaysia shared so many of the ideals in both.

"I believe, collectively, OIC member states can push forward many ideas to UNESCO which are much needed by Islamic countries, be it in the areas of education, science, culture, heritage and many others," he said.

He pointed out that since joining the OIC during its inception year in 1969, Malaysia had actively participated in many of its initiatives over the years.

The deputy prime minister further noted that Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman took the tasks of the newly-created post of OIC secretary-general in Jeddah from 1970 to 1974.

Muhyiddin is in the French capital for a series of events in connection with Malaysia's intention to be on the UNESCO executive board for the 2015-2019 term.

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