

Malaysia Tapping Into 'STEM' For Future Growth - Muhyiddin

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From Muin Abdul Majid

GENEVA, April 16 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has spoken of the need for Malaysia to harness skills and knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) across all sectors to remain on the growth trajectory towards economic and societal gains.

He noted that Malaysia had transformed from an agriculture-based economy to become a resource and manufacturing-based economy.

It was, however, discomfoting to know that countries which started on the same level as Malaysia had moved to positions much further ahead.

"It is obviously evident that these countries had made full use of STEM to boost their fortunes," he said in explaining Malaysia's drive for STEM going forward.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said this in remarks during a visit to the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva, Wednesday during which he presented his views on 'The Role of STEM in Fostering Sustainable Development - The Malaysian Experience'.

Geneva was the second city he visited after a three-day working visit to Paris in connection with Malaysia's bid to be on the UNESCO executive board for the 2015-2019 term.

The deputy prime minister said that in order for Malaysia to be in the high-income advanced economy bracket, the country's future economic model must be based on the tertiary and quaternary sectors of industry which were driven mainly by knowledge and innovation.

Muhyiddin said that it was apparent human capital development in STEM would be vital in the national transformation process.

"A strategy comprising a series of actionable plans must be able to support the production rates needed for generating skilled STEM human capital at two levels, namely secondary schools and tertiary institutions, to achieve the target of 500,000 STEM graduates by 2020," he said.

The deputy prime minister further said that there was a need to bring students to love science and science classes, and in the case of Malaysia, especially among the boys.

"We must make science subjects interesting, easy to understand, more hands-on and exploratory," he said.

Also present at the event was IBE director Dr Mmantsetsa Marope.

IBE is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) institute specialising in educational contents, methods and structures.

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