

**Science Must Be Relevant To Nation's Aspirations - Muhyiddin
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 26 (Bernama) -- Looking at today's global development challenges, science, technology and innovation must be relevant to the needs and aspirations of each and every country, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The Deputy Prime Minister said therefore, science must be pursued with a purpose as it was the most essential tool to drive every country's economy, including Malaysia.

"While basic research is a fundamental requirement for the expansion of knowledge, translational research is also critical to solve the problems of today and the future," he said when opening the third United Nations Secretary-General Scientific Advisory Board Meeting here, Tuesday.

Also present were Director General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova and Science Advisor to the Prime Minister Prof Tan Sri Zakri Abdul Hamid.

Muhyiddin said that international cooperation needed to emphasise on capacity-building, with advanced countries assisting and strengthening the scientific abilities of developing countries.

International collaboration and networking in science, exemplified so well by this Scientific Advisory Board, was also a key imperative because science had no geographic, political or cultural boundaries, he said.

Muhyiddin said, as for Malaysia, the past three decades had been a period of rapid and sustained growth facilitated by the government through liberalising of markets, offering incentives for investment, removing barriers and encouraging the private sector to help co-develop its progress.

"We have put in place policies, regulations and guidelines to promote sustainable development.

"Our aim is a clean, safe and healthy environment for all Malaysians. "As we prepare to join the ranks of the high-income nations, we will be inspired by the precedent set in the last," Muhyiddin added.

According to him, Malaysia also has pursued integrated sustainable development strategies which was included in its recently launched 11th Malaysia Plan in a way to bring economic, social and environmental objectives of society together.

Muhyiddin said that these objectives would maximise human wellbeing in the present without comprising the interest and the needs of future generations.

Meanwhile, Bokova in her speech, called for deeper collaboration across all the fields and borders to share in the creation and distribution of knowledge and innovation.

"Humanity, I believe has entered a new age of limits and this calls on all societies to make far more of the boundless opportunities to be found in human creativity, to craft new solutions that are inclusive, just and sustainable.

"This calls for stronger sciences - it calls for more connected sciences. The sciences are the way to link together the economic, the environmental and the social dimensions of sustainability," she said.

Touching on the Board's objectives for this year, Bokova stressed that one of their plan was to look into the emerging issue of climate-induced risks such as the flood which had affected this country recently.

She added the Board was also exploring how the data revolution could promote access to information, data and services for all, as well as the capacity needed in regions where Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) infrastructure was lacking.

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