

## **Need To Boost Economic Ties With The Bahamas – Muhyiddin**

**Bernama**

**June 23, 2015**

**From Muin Abdul Majid**

NASSAU, June 23 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said there is a need to develop an economic cooperation framework between Malaysia and The Bahamas to help shift bilateral ties between the two Commonwealth countries into a higher gear.

The Malaysian deputy prime minister said he would bring up the matter in talks with his Bahamian counterpart Philip E. Brave Davis scheduled for Tuesday here. (Malaysia is 12 hours ahead of The Bahamas).

He said that notwithstanding the cordial ties enjoyed between the two countries, the scope of bilateral cooperation was still limited as reflected in, for example, the low levels of two-way economic activity and trade volume.

"In this regard, I would take the opportunity to suggest the formation of an economic cooperation framework between Malaysia and The Bahamas with a view to boosting our bilateral linkages," Muhyiddin said.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, told Malaysian media this on the sidelines of the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19CCEM) taking place here from June 22 to 26.

Total trade between Malaysia and The Bahamas in 2014 amounted to US\$98.67 million (RM354.4 million), a significant growth of 510.3 per cent compared to 2013.

The Bahamas is an archipelago of around 700 islands in the West Atlantic, southeast of the coast of Florida in the United States and northeast of Cuba.

The economy of The Bahamas is heavily dependent on tourism and offshore banking.

Besides talks with the Bahamian deputy prime minister, Muhyiddin is scheduled to attend the opening of the 19CCEM Tuesday evening.

Also on his itinerary is a bilateral meeting with Bahamian Education, Science and Technology Minister Jerome Fitzgerald.

Muhyiddin said that given this country's strong tourism profile, education cooperation focusing on this field could be explored.

"May be their experience in building up their tourism and hospitality industry could be shared through cooperation in the field of education," he said.

The deputy prime minister further said that Malaysian businessmen should eye

opportunities in the tourism and hotel industry in The Bahamas which attracts celebrities and international footballers, among others, to its shores.

Muhyiddin is also scheduled to have a bilateral meeting with Jamaican Education Minister Reverend Ronald Thwaites on Tuesday.

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