

**Teaching Service Scheme must be given Attention and Improved – Zahid  
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KOTA KINABALU, May 16 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi wants the education ministry to give serious attention to the current teaching service scheme to ensure that it is improved.

Ahmad Zahid said the accolades showered on teachers during the teachers' day celebrations each year were not enough to appreciate the contributions of this group of people.

Instead, their welfare should also be given attention through the teaching service scheme, he said.

"I have confidence in the current Education Minister who has teaching background. Please do the best for your fellow teachers," he said during his speech at the launch of the 45th National Teachers' Day celebrations at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah campus, here Monday.

Also present was Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, and his two deputies Datuk P. Kamalanathan and Senator Chong Sin Woon, Education Department director-general Datuk Seri Dr Khair Mohamad Yusof and Sabah Education director Maimunah Suhaibul.

Ahmad Zahid also said he was confident once the national economy has recovered, efforts to improve the teaching service scheme will be realised and be better than the present.

He also urged the Education Ministry to take a serious look at the curriculum of cross-cultures as a subject in primary schools and even in pre-schools in order to foster better understanding of the different cultures, religions and races among students in this country.

Ahmad Zahid said if taught from the pre-school stage, the subject could nurture real and strong unity among the people.

He said a study of the unity index conducted by the education ministry in 2014 found that the interaction index between teachers and students was 6.69, which showed that the ties between the two were strong, but the acceptance level of the differences in race, culture and religion was still low.

"I urge the education ministry to start taking a serious look at the curriculum for cross-culture to give it focus to create real unity, not just in the classroom but also outside the school. Cross-culture must be fostered at the primary school level, and even in pre-school," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said during his student days in university, the level of interaction between people of different races, cultures and religions in institutes of higher learning was low, with each group more inclined and comfortable with their own ethnic group.

However, he said, if the interaction was fostered at an earlier stage, people would get to know and respect others, thus promoting real unity among Malaysians at all levels.

On the contributions and roles of teachers in developing the people of Malaysia, and the success of teachers in lifting the education system to an international level, Ahmad Zahid said this was obvious.

Ahmad Zahid said he was confident that with the various transformations in the national education system which had been and are being implemented, as well as the high level of commitment of teachers, the local skilled workforce could fill the 1.5 million jobs which will be created in the country by 2020.

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