

UNESCO Hails Malaysia as Leader in Advancing Education for Peace

Bernama

Sept 23, 2016

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- UNESCO has hailed Malaysia as among the leaders of countries in the Asia and Pacific region in advancing education for peace.

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, said it had a long-standing and deep partnership with Malaysia that benefits the region as a whole, based on shared values and the vision of inclusive societies that gain strength from diversity.

"Indeed, under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Malaysia had taken a firm stance against violent extremism through inclusion and education, which UNESCO considers the most effective long-term prevention to forces threatening to divide societies," UNESCO director-general Irina Bokova said.

In a statement dated Sept 22 published on the UNESCO website, she said Malaysia was also leading the way in Southeast Asia in fostering inclusive and equitable education as the basis for sustainable green growth.

Bokova lauded Malaysia's National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which she said has comprehensive focus, from early childhood and across the learning cycle.

"It encompasses attention to equity and quality, as well as the competences and skills required to live together on the basis of respect and mutual understanding," she said.

Bokova also praised Malaysia's PERMATA programme, saying it stands as an outstanding example of inclusion, reaching the most marginalised, through holistic approaches that start at the earliest age.

She said PERMATA also promotes values of peace, non-violence and respect for cultural diversity, and improves lifetime opportunities for children and youth.

PERMATA is an education programme specifically designed for the physical and intellectual development of children below four years old, of which the Prime Minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, is patron.

Bokova said Malaysia was proof that respect for diversity is a source of enrichment, a conviction at the heart of UNESCO's programmes.

She added that this was reflected in the choice of Kuala Lumpur to host the new Regional Counter-Messaging Communication Centre, and in line with the Prime Minister's call for a Global Movement of Moderates against extremism.

"The country has taken the lead, with Indonesia, to encourage a nation-wide discussion on the teaching of religion to promote tolerance, respect and mutual understanding," Bokova said.

"This spirit of dialogue and openness echoes all UNESCO's actions to promote peace and improve human dignity through the 'soft power' of education, culture and the sciences."

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