

Human Resource Development Roundtable 2007

*Towards a Sustainable Future: What are the challenges for Education and training
Monday, 27th August, 2007, Empire Hotel and Country Club*

Press Release

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Quality Education The Way Towards Sustainable Future

By Sonia K

[Bandar Seri Begawan](#) - Brunei Darussalam, and perhaps many other nations, must recognise a number of barriers and challenges if they are to be successful in achieving their goals for education for a sustainable future.

Minister of Education, Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, said this in his keynote address on 'Quality Education for Brunei Darussalam: Challenges and Opportunities' during a Human Resource Development Roundtable 2007.

Organised by Asia Inc Forum Roundtable and held yesterday at the Empire Hotel and Country Club, the minister also briefly spoke about the general aspect of sustainability at the global level, its development and how this has an impact on sustainable development.

He also described where Brunei stands in terms of its strategies and development, particularly with regard to some of the key challenges it faces in inculcating early awareness and desirable habits among present and future generations on sustainable development.

He said the challenge of Education for a Sustainable Future (ESF) is to enable students to make choices that incorporate the essential principles and values of sustainability. "To do this, students need to be given opportunities to think and act according to the principles of sustainability. This process will contribute to their development as informed and responsible citizens who demonstrate and make decisions that reflect concern for the sustainability of this planet," said the minister.

The Pehin said Brunei supports the ideals of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (NDES), which provides an

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opportunity to progress towards implementing universal quality education that fosters the knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that lead to a more sustainable future.

"Quality education is at the heart of our strategic plan. We must work harder towards translating our desire for a sustainable future through our curriculum and our teaching in the schools. Our schools and higher institutions should be committed to and involved in special projects, such as the Heart of Borneo," the minister said.

"Here, the teachers and school leaders can become role models for promoting positive attitudes towards a healthy environment and sustainability for our natural resources. The teachers must not be perceived to just preach but must be seen to practise it," the Pehin added.

He also said that teaching children to understand and respect the environment and become committed to sustainability should not be confined to just within the school, it should be a wider community effort, beginning at home and including private or public partnerships, which are part and parcel of quality education for all.

"There are many competing demands on us in education, through our teaching and curriculum, to provide an effective education system that supports economic development, our nation's well being and for our young people to learn skills and knowledge to survive in a very competitive globalised world," he said.

Brunei has been working relentlessly in improving its education system and hopes to introduce a new education system for the 21st Century, which will be phased into our primary and secondary schools in the coming years, accompanied by new and revised examinations to measure achievement, he added.

The Ministry of Education is in the process of building more schools and institutions of higher learning, including technical and vocational institutions, as well as upgrading the existing institutions. "Our aim is to introduce greater flexibility in our system, provide children with

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more choices and multiple pathways towards higher education. Our vision is to provide an education towards a developed, peaceful and prosperous nation," he said.

Stakeholders such as parents, experts, teachers, school leaders and the community have told the ministry to focus on developing children that become part of a caring, ethical and resilient society; provide the human resource needs of a diversified economy; provide a wider choice of education; nurture well-rounded students; raise achievements; develop life-long learning skills, as well as prepare students with valuable and marketable skills.

The minister also highlighted some of the challenges that are facing Brunei's education to drive towards quality and excellence. They are: enhancing the quality of service providers, particularly schools, colleges and institutions of higher learning; increasing relevancy and more balanced curriculum that reflects present and future needs of society and young learners; improving schools, including the environment for teaching and learning, and involving more use of computers and modern technologies in the classroom; improving school leadership and providing financial autonomy to schools; and developing effective partnership with community and industry.

"I believe we can achieve all these if we work together, have adequate resources and are committed to our aims. This will require us to develop a professional, accountable and efficient organisation. Part of the ministry's drive for efficiency and professionalism is to improve teaching and learning through scholarship schemes, training programmes at Universiti Brunei Darussalam and Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, and in-service programmes," he said. -- ***Courtesy of Borneo Bulletin***

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Education Must Meet Market Demand

By Shareen Han

[Bandar Seri Begawan](#) - The people of Brunei Darussalam must change the way they think and lead their lives for the country to find its place in the global stage, a forum on education and training to meet future needs concluded yesterday.

During all open forum discussion at the Empire Hotel, panelists from the public and private sector tackled a range of issues facing Brunei's human resource development in securing a sustainable future.

A senior government official said that the future direction must be clear and precise for educational institutions to match and meet the needs and demand of Brunei.

A product of education must meet the demands of the society at the national and global level, in areas of skills, attitudes, professionalism, culture, and the environment, said the official who declined to be named.

"How do we balance and manage these various areas of demand in order to have quality education?"

"We may end up operating in silos, running in circles with no meeting point," he added during the forum organised by AsiaInc Forum, in collaboration with the Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies.

The official posed the question of whether Brunei is indeed meeting the current and future needs of the country.

He cited a news report that there are 6,000 registered local job-seekers, but about 60,000 foreign expatriates are working in the country.

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"I strongly believe that the role of education is first and foremost to provide employment," he said, adding that he is deeply concerned with the jobs filled up by foreigners.

No matter how good are the teaching strategies or the curriculum, it all goes back to the individual's willingness to learn, said Pg Dr Hj Rahmah Pg Hj Jadid, managing director of Leaps Educational Services.

A panelist at the forum, Pg Dr Hj Rahmah said that there is a need to empower people in order to achieve sustainable growth. She said that the key challenge for the new education system is to maximise students' learning styles and bring out the best in the individual students.

"The quality of education has changed, it used to be providing access to education, but it is now focused on individuals' learning," she said.

She stated that learning cannot be reduced to acquiring knowledge only, but an individual processing information and constructing new meanings based on the information.

Dr Omar Hj Khalid, special duties officer at the Ministry of Education, mentioned that Brunei do not have topics on sustainable development in the school curriculum.

He said that students should understand the concept of sustainability itself, and possess the skills to identify the implications that sustainability has on themselves and the wider communities.

"Schools should always practice what they preach, from recycling to having a litter free environment, but this is not happening in schools," he said.

"Many projects have gone up the roof because there is a huge shortage of people who can implement the projects," said Fred Smeenk, managing director of Brunei LNG.

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The panelist said that the availability of technical human resources in operation more complex projects is a challenge in Brunei.

"How do we get more youngsters to study technical subjects to have the marketable skills in the workplace?"

Brian Fry, a human resource director at Alcoa, echoed the same sentiments, saying that technical skills in engineering were not "glamorous" as it once was.

Quality education is the capability to develop human resources to participate and contribute in the country's development, said Mark Been, operations manager of TOTAL. -- ***Courtesy of The Brunei Times***

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Education & Training For Brunei's Future

By Sonia K.

[Bandar Seri Begawan](#) - Asia Inc Forum, in collaboration with the Centre for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS), organised the Human Resource Development Roundtable 2007 on "Towards a Sustainable Future: What are the challenges for education and training?"

The dialogue touched on education and training required to meet future social and economic challenges, the notion of quality education and how the private sector can contribute to education and training.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by the CEO of Asia Inc Forum, Allen Lai.

Pengiran Dato Paduka Hj Ismail bin Pengiran Haji Mohamed, Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office and Chairman of CSPS, said he hoped that the roundtable would provide quality input for the types of education, training and development required to meet the various challenges for Brunei's sustainable future.

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He said CSPS is finalising two important research projects, one on economic diversification, and another on social security.

"We just started one research work on 'Youth and Unemployment' and will be commissioning shortly another research in the area of education," he said.

Minister of Education Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Lela Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib spoke on 'Quality Education for Brunei Darussalam: Challenges and Opportunities'.

He touched on the general aspects of sustainability at the global level, its development and how it has an impact on sustainable development.

He described where Brunei stands in terms of its strategies and development, particularly with regard to some of the key challenges it faces in inculcating early awareness and desirable habits among present and future generations on sustainable development.

An open forum discussed "Education and training to meet future needs: Ideas from government and from the private sector."

The panel was made up of Fred Smeenk, Managing Director of Brunei LNG; Mark Been, Operations Manager at TOTAL; Dr Omar Haji Khalid, Special Duties Officer at the Brunei's Ministry of Education, Brian D Fry, HR Director of Global Primary Products Growth at Alcoa and Pg Dr Hj Rahmah bte Pg Hj Jadid, Managing Director at LEAPS Educational Service. Moderating the open discussion was Acting Chairman of Brunei Economic Development Board, Dato Paduka Timothy Ong.

The forum was partnered by Total, Brunei LNG ING Private Banking, Alcoa, BAG Networks and supported by The Empire Hotel and Country Club. -- ***Courtesy of Borneo Bulletin***