

Literacy rate improving

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Hishammuddin: Country's education policies on track

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's literacy rate, which has consistently improved, is evidence that it is one of the few countries in the world to have achieved so much in education.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the literacy rate improved from 90.6% in 2002 to 92.5% in 2006.

"This clearly shows that the country's education policies are on track," he said in a statement.

Hishammuddin was in Beijing for the two-day Unesco regional conference in support of global literacy which ended on Wednesday.

The conference entitled *Literacy challenges in East Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific: Building partnerships and promoting innovative*

approaches, was the second of six regional meetings on global literacy to be held.

They follow on from the White House Conference on Global Literacy, held in New York in September last year.

As the Malaysian representative, Hishammuddin said the country has pledged its full support towards the Unesco agenda in improving literacy rates.

"At the same time, our commitment is not just to ensure the three R skills of reading, writing and arithmetic but to see an improvement in literacy rates which involve producing people who are knowledgeable, creative, innovative, disciplined and are able to compete in a

global employment market," he said.

The plan to improve literacy rates in order to achieve Unesco's agenda in providing education for all demands the implementation of educational policies and instruments, which can meet the people's needs, he added.

"In my presentation during the conference, I offered Malaysia's experience as a reference to other countries, particularly the challenges which can prevent the offering of quality education to people from various backgrounds," he said.

He also spoke on the *National Education Blueprint 2006- 2010* during his presentation to give a clear picture of the Malaysian experience.