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Private schools will be treated fairly, promises new minister

PUTRAJAYA: The Higher Education Ministry will ensure that the private higher education sector is treated fairly for its contributions to the country.

"Both public and private higher education institutions are involved in nation building. The Government will continue to act as facilitators for the growth of both sectors," said Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

He noted that some private institutions were doing a good job offering high quality courses.

"If private institutions have good courses, I don't see any problem in us placing (government sponsored) students there, rather than at public institutions only," said Khaled.

He expressed his concern about courses offered by public institutions that do not meet the requirements of the job market and the country.

"We might reduce the number of students in non-relevant courses," he said after "taking over" the ministry from his predecessor Datuk

Mustapa Mohamed yesterday.

Khaled said it was wasteful for the Government to subsidise students in disciplines where the unemployment rate was high.

"Why should we waste money on courses where the graduates cannot find jobs? We should use the money for other courses instead," he said.

On his new portfolio, Khaled, the former Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development Minister, said: "The scope and responsibilities are much greater. I will ensure that the policies spelt out in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan and the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-10 are carried out.

"There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The only thing that may change is the implementation."

Khaled added that he would ensure that the good work started by his predecessor would continue. "I thank Tok Pa (Mustapa) for his contributions," he said.