

01/06/1998

Ministry plans to set up Mara education fund

MALACCA, Sun. - The Entrepreneur Development Ministry plans to set up a Mara education fund to help the agency disburse loans to poor Bumiputera students who intend to pursue tertiary education.

Its Minister, Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, said the proposal had already been approved by the Mara Board of Governors and the ministry. It is awaiting approval from the Finance Ministry.

"The ministry is submitting the proposal for the formation of this fund to the Finance Ministry. Upon gaining approval the fund will be set up next year," he said.

He was launching the MRSM Graduates Association's Education Programme and Fund at MRSM Terendak.

Mustapa expressed hope Mara could raise enough funds to help students.

Also present were MRSM Graduates Association president Mirzan Mahathir, Mara deputy director-general Mydin Shariff, Third Army Division commandant Major General Datuk Mohd Zaini Mohd Said and Alor Gajah MP Datuk Abu Seman Mohd Yusoff.

Mustapa added that the ministry also hoped that contributions to the fund could be raised from former Mara students who had either received loans or scholarships in the past.

"I think it is timely that these recipients be among the first contributors to the fund," he said.

He added that the ministry hoped to raise between RM3 and RM4 million initially.

Mara had already sponsored 118,000 students to pursue higher education either through full or partial scholarships and loans.

He said the additional RM101 million allocated by the Government to Mara would enable Mara to sponsor at least 25,000 students in local higher institutions.

Previously, he said the agency could only sponsor slightly more than 11,000 students to pursue tertiary education with an initial allocation of RM63 million.

Meanwhile, Mirzan said he hoped to collect as much money as possible from the MRSM Graduates Association's Education Fund to finance its activities.

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