

28/02/2000

Hands-on skills training (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Enhancing skills through hands-on training and the need to promote greater awareness of information technology and its application were among resolutions passed at the Young Malay Professionals Congress which ended today.

After two days of debate and brainstorming, participants felt that skills training among Bumiputeras was vital in helping to achieve their potential.

On this, the congress wants an independent quality control body to be set up to ensure that proper evaluation is done on the country's education system and to give appropriate advice.

The congress was jointly organised by Mara and Ansara, an association of former students of Mara Junior Science Colleges. It was declared open by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi closed it today.

Reflecting on the importance of creating awareness in IT, the congress proposed that a balik kampung campaign be launched where Malay professionals monitor the level of exposure and infrastructure development of the sector in their villages.

They are required to report on the development, or the lack of it, to the respective agencies.

Dr Mahathir's reminder that change might be needed for Malays to progress was also reflected in the resolutions.

The participants agreed that knowledge-based cost-efficiency could enhance competitiveness and resilience.

The congress passed and adopted a total of 30 resolutions covering education, religion, culture and society, entrepreneurship, economy and finance and high technology.

A copy of the resolutions was handed over to Abdullah who later said a permanent secretariat would be set up at Mara to facilitate and ensure their successful implementation.

While expressing confidence that the younger Malays possessed the capability to continue championing the Malay cause, Abdullah said the community should not regard government assistance as a right that would forever be extended to them.

He said the Government believed it still had to play an important role in the development of the Malays, but felt that this could only succeed if they also played their role.

"If the community wants to see progress, it must be prepared to change.

"It must be prepared to change in terms of not hoping and depending on the Government for help.

"Globalisation does not discriminate between the Malays and other races.

"If we fail to act in facing these challenges, the position of the Malays will be eroded gradually."

Citing the Chinese as an example, Abdullah said they had succeeded as they had no other choice but to work hard.

"When we can compete and succeed without protection and support of anyone, only then can we say it is the end of the Malay dilemma," he said.

In this era of information technology, Abdullah said the Government's assistance in areas like education, employment and business would only be provided at the initial stage. "The Government can be regarded as an incubator for the Malays. The responsibility to progress and succeed

beyond this rests with each individual."
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