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Hishammuddin: 61 per cent of 8,000 registered youth bodies are inactive

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Of the 8,000 youth organisations registered in the country, only 39 per cent were found to be active, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said today.

This small number is said to be due to several factors, including weak leadership, lack of funding, irrelevant and unattractive activities and a weak image of youth movements.

He said even the active organisations only had the membership of 415,956 youths.

"I will be looking into this personally, and (assure everyone) that there is 'political will' to solve the matter."

"All efforts will be taken to reactivate the youth movements, (the ministry) would also help source financial allocations while increasing our capabilities."

He said this at the opening ceremony of the Malaysian Youth Council's 50th annual general meeting and the Youth and Governance Convention. The three-day AGM is being attended by 400 delegates representing more than 35 youth bodies nationwide.

There are 9.8 million citizens who fall under the youth category (those aged 15-40 years). The figure accounts for 43 per cent of the 21 million population.

Of the 9.8 million youths, only 1.8 million are members of youth organisations, 3.3 million are involved in political organisations and the rest are not involved in any organisation.

To cultivate greater youth involvement and activate youth movements, the Government recently set up a Cabinet Committee on Youth Affairs and revived the National Youth Consultative Council, both of which are chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

At a Press conference later, Hishammuddin said the MYC has been given the task of identifying why the movements were inactive, take measures to inject new spirit and reactivate such movements.

"The ministry will provide the infrastructure and channel but the programmes must come from the youths," he said when urging youths to step forward with their suggestions.

On the call for more representation of youths in the national leadership, Hishammuddin said there were already established channels for youths to voice their views on nation-building.

"The participation and contribution of youths have many levels. What is important is that (movements) are committed, have their agenda and can attract huge numbers. With this seriousness, we can identify future leaders."

He said the ministry, and he himself as a youth leader, should be seen as channels for youths to voice their concerns.

In other areas, youths were also represented through bodies like the MYC and in important national policy-making committees like the National Economic Consultative Council II.

On the revamping of the Rakan Muda programme, Hishammuddin said the ministry was looking at the latest interests of the younger generation.

He cited in-line skating and skateboarding as some of the youth sports that could be looked into and possibly adapted into youth programmes.

"The new look Rakan Muda can attract the rest of the 4.7 million youths who are still not members of any organisation. We must consider activities

like motorsports, knowledge, religion and voluntary services as youths have different interests."

He said the ministry was looking into working with the corporate sector and voluntary organisations into developing more programmes for youths.

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