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Nod for education association

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The inaugural Malay Education Congress today unanimously passed a resolution to form an association to improve the performance of Malays in the education sector.

It also approved two other resolutions to form a Malay Research, Education and Development Institute and a Malay Education and Development Fund.

Speaking at the end of the two-day meeting, organising chairman Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said the association would be formed after approval was obtained from the Registrar of Societies.

"Our approach is different from other congresses as we will not send our resolutions to any party, except the association that will be formed," he added.

He said the organising committee members would consider all the resolutions and the action to be taken.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad opened the congress at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

It was attended by 1,000 academicians, educationists, government officials and students.

The congress was organised by the West Malaysia Malay Teachers Association and Kumpulan Melayu Prihatin (Concerned Malay Group).

Six declarations were also passed, including one which called for changes in government policies on Malay rights not to be inconsistent with the social contract reflected in the Federal Constitution.

Earlier, congress treasurer Datuk Suhaimi Kamaruddin, while proposing the resolution to register the association, said the meritocracy system proposed for the intake of Malay students in local universities is contrary to Article 153 of the Constitution.

He said the Constitution clearly mentioned the quota system for the intake of Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera students.

Asked about this, Tengku Razaleigh said it was Suhaimi's personal view, adding that what was more important was the resolution to form the association.

He said the meritocracy issue did not contradict the Constitution as the quota system was maintained.

"What they are doing is just to raise the minimum entry qualification for Malay students for certain courses in universities."

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin said some quarters did not understand the rationale of the move to implement the meritocracy system.

"The Prime Minister, in announcing the proposed meritocracy system, asked parents to improve their children's education. There was no mention of the quota system as we will continue to give opportunities to those who deserve it."