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University-Integration

CALL FOR RACIAL INTEGRATION TO START IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- Universiti Malaya (UM) Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Anuar Zaini Md Zain today called for racial integration to begin in primary schools in efforts to create more understanding among the country's multi-racial society.

He said the primary schools would be the best stage to educate children on the importance of unity among the people.

"It will be easier for them when they reach the universities and upon entering the employment sector if it (racial integration) begins in schools," he said after opening the symposium on "The role Of Universities in Agenda 21: Building Partnerships" here today.

Dr Anuar Zaini said if there was no unity, then students would face challenges in the globalisation era as for them to advance, their association in society must not be limited to only certain races.

He said this when asked to comment on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday that the government would not allow racial polarisation to continue in schools and universities.

"The Prime Minister's words must be taken seriously. The comments have deep meaning. Hence, we should take it as a challenge and jointly deal with the issue," he said.

Dr Anuar Zaini said until now racial polarisation still existed among university students.

He said the problem did not only involved UM but also other local universities as well.

"This (problem) is not only between the Malays, Chinese and Indians but it also happens among the Malays themselves. Some of them do not mix around and prefer to stay in cliques," he said.

Dr Anuar Zaini said racial polarisation was a universal issue and can be influenced by factors within the university or that from outside.

"We have found that outside parties are trying to influence the students for their political interest," he said.

Dr Anuar Zaini called on the students to be open-minded and practical when embracing the racial integration concept.

"We do not want to see misunderstandings among the races," he said.

-- BERNAMA

FAY AHH ZUL