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'Malays must trust Government decisions'

EDUCATION Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad wants the Malays to trust the decisions made by the Government on some issues as they were made to strengthen their abilities.

Musa said although it may look as though some of the decisions would not benefit the Malays, they would, in fact, do them good in the years to come.

"As an Umno and supreme council member as well as the Minister, I have the responsibility to implement the party's and Government's decisions and if I were seen as being wrong for doing my duties, then I accept it with an open heart," he said when winding up points raised by delegates at the Umno Youth assembly.

Musa said he would ensure that the implementation committee which was set up to look into the matter would take heed of all the grouses and advice conveyed by assembly delegates.

The delegates had earlier in their debate raised various issues relating to education such as the meritocracy system, the 10 per cent intake of non-Bumiputera students into Mara Junior Colleges and matriculation centres, National Higher Education Fund and the use of English as a medium in science and mathematics.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said one reason for the few Bumiputera students in private institutions of higher learnings was because they were not proficient in English.

If Bumiputera students were exposed to English at an early age, Dr Mohd Khir, who is also Youth exco member, said they would not feel inferior when enrolling in private colleges or university.

"When I entered Universiti Malaya to do dentistry, my English was appalling and I had so much difficulty. I don't want the students today to face the same problem," he added.

He also clarified that the Government's stand was to promote the use of English and not to turn it into the national language.

Penang delegate Raja Munir Raja Ahmad expressed disappointment over other BN component parties' stand over recent educational issues like the 10 per cent quota for non-Bumiputera students in Mara Science Colleges and meritocracy.

"Our so-called partners are making all sorts of unreasonable demands. They must know who they are and who they are dealing with. There is a limit to our patience."

He also called on Hishammuddin to hold discussions with his counterparts from other parties to explain Umno's stand on educational issues like the number of Malay students in private institutions of higher learnings.

Negri Sembilan representative Jalaludin Alias said he was against the use of English to teach science and mathematics.

He added even before English was introduced in these subjects, the performance of Malay students in science and mathematics had not been very good, especially in the rural areas.

"Besides, there are not enough English teachers now, let alone those to teach science and mathematics in English. Perhaps, the Education Ministry should start teaching history and geography in English," he added.

Umno Youth executive council member Azimi Daim called on members not to be overcome by emotions over the issue of meritocracy and the 10 per cent quota for non-Bumiputera students in Mara Science College.

"Malays now are different. Please don't think that taking away the privilege is something bad. The Malays must stand up to the challenge to prove that they are as capable," added Azimi.

He said the movement also supported Education Minister Datuk Musa Mohammad who had helped the Malays in education.

Kelantan delegate Mohd Zin Yassin proposed that more religious teachers be sent for tertiary education, in line with the Education Ministry's move to encourage teachers to further their studies.

He added that the Sultan Idris Teaching University should take the lead by providing a tertiary course on Islam, especially catered for teachers who wished to pursue their studies.

"We do not want to be accused of neglecting religion. Just as the Ministry encourages more teachers to further their studies in fields like science and mathematics, Islam should also not be left out."

Mohd Zin also suggested that more religious schools be upgraded to fully residential schools to enable students there study in a more conducive environment.

Tebrau youth division head Abdul Halim Suleiman said the movement should immediately embark on a social movement to study the attitude and thinking of young Malays.

He said Johor Umno Youth should set up a think tank to study the thinking and attitude of the Malays.

Abdul Halim said the movement and the Malays should view the advice given by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the plight of the Malays in an exclusive interview with Mingguan Malaysia as a challenge.

In the interview with the newspaper, Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying that the Malays still did not work hard to improve themselves and preferred to depend on the Government.

Dr Mahathir said his biggest regret in his political career was not being able to make the Malays change.

Abdul Halim said the study should be conducted nationwide with participation of the various parties including the movement and non-governmental organisations at all levels.

"They must go to the ground, be the ears and eyes of the party, listening to the grouses and views of the grassroots. This will enable us to address the problems."

Federal Territory Youth head Haidar Ali Sheikh Fadzir said that the question of the movement's credibility should not be used as reasons for the leaders to deny members the chance to stand as candidates in the election and sit on the board of directors in any of the government agencies.

"We are ever ready to shoulder the responsibilities and given the chance by the leaders, we will make sure that we deliver," he said.

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