

Chinese groups want National Service fine-tuned

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KUALA LUMPUR: Twenty-six Chinese organisations and associations support National Service training but want minor details ironed out before its implementation next year.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said: "They not only support the programme but will also organise road shows to explain to the (Chinese) community its merits."

Some 60 representatives from various organisations and associations, led by MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, attended a briefing at the Defence Ministry yesterday.

Speaking to reporters after the briefing, Najib said the group also promised to provide feedback from the Chinese community on the programme.

"They want details of the

programme. They also want individual problems to be taken into consideration, like the disruption of studies," said Najib, outlining concerns raised during the briefing.

National Service, the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is aimed at school-leavers who have completed the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia. It is designed to instil patriotism among youths and bridge gaps between the communities.

"They (the 26 organisations and associations) accept the programme's aim but want it to have the right racial composition and this includes the trainers."

Najib said the group wanted the government's assurance that religious elements will not be involved.