

**Mara will exist as long as Umno rules, PM vows**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**Apr 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**Koh Jun Lin**

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has promised that Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara) would continue to exist as long as Umno remains in power.

He even went a step further to equate Umno's survival to that of Mara's, and by extension, that of Malays.

“Mara is born from whose womb? Umno's. Without Umno, Mara would have never existed.

“So when (Rural and Regional Development Minister) Ismail Sabri Yaakob promised that Mara would continue to exist as long as the moon and the sun exists, I want to say that in actuality, Mara would continue exist as long as Umno remains in power on this blessed earth.

“Without Umno, Mara would be buried. If Mara is buried, the Malays are finished (tersungkur). The bumiputera are finished. That's why no matter what, we have to defend Umno,” he said in Kuala Lumpur today to mark Mara's 50th anniversary.

In what may be a veiled jibe at former Umno leaders who had called for his resignation, Najib also urged the audience not to work with those who have betrayed Umno.

Mara is a government agency under the Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

However, Najib said it would be an understatement to call Mara an 'agency' for its contributions to nation-building.

He said many personalities ranging from entrepreneurs to cabinet ministers would not have become successful without grants, scholarships, and other assistance from Mara, and named several prominent personalities as examples of those who had benefited.

However, he said 50 years of Mara aid were still not enough to reverse the effects of over four centuries of colonial rule on Malays and bumiputeras, and more time was needed.

### **Slew of changes**

In that vein, Najib announced a slew of changes to Mara.

He said Mara's subsidiaries would be restructured under a new government-linked investment company Mara Corporation Berhad. The company would be worth RM1.4 billion.

“It won't incur any additional allocation from the government, but it will be rearranged under one roof. (It will be) tidier, more streamlined, has better governance, and it would move along more smoothly,” he said.

As for Mara's loans to entrepreneurs, Najib said these services would be consolidated under Rural Capital Sdn Bhd, which would offer various financial facilities and advice to entrepreneurs.

Najib also announced a new university for Mara, dubbed UniMara.

Mara Education Foundation would be renamed Mara Foundation, he added, so that the foundation would not be restricted to providing only educational aid but other types of assistance, such as flood relief.

In a symbolic move, Najib also announced the renaming of a road located outside Mara's headquarters.

Jalan Semarang, a 135-metre stretch of one-way street that connects Jalan Raja Laut to Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, would henceforth be named as Jalan Mara.

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