

**Back me up, PM tells Malay entrepreneurs**  
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**Aidila Razak**

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today sought to rally support from Malay entrepreneurs in the elimination of race-based affirmative action mooted in the New Economic Model (NEM), saying that the system appears to have been abused.

NONEspeaking at the Malay Entrepreneur Convention 2010, organized by the Malaysian Malay Chamber of Commerce (DPMM) at Kuala Lumpur, Najib (extreme left in photo) pointed out that many Malays were using the current system to make 'fast money' through government handouts and this has got to stop.

An example of this, he said, were the number of class F bumiputera contractors who rely on government contracts, but subcontract the work to others.

"The people in the kampungs are complaining to me. We gave a contract (to a Malay contractor) worth RM30, 000 to build a football field but outcome is not worth that much.

Giving up fruits of hard work

"We know what's happening, and (Malay entrepreneurs) should keep this in mind," he said to a nodding audience of around 500 people.

The proposal to replace pro-bumiputera affirmative action has seen considerable resistance from pro-Malay groups like NGO Perkasa, which believe that the community is unable to compete on merit.

According to the NGO, which has the backing of former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, the first edition of NEM, launched on Mar 30, is unsatisfactory as it neglects the 'Malay agenda'.

Najib also explained that while the New Economic Policy (NEP), which brought about race-based policies in 1970 had laudable objectives, the implementation requires "fine-tuning".

"Is the implementation (of the NEP) fair to both bumiputera and non-bumiputera?" he asked.

Providing an alternative perspective, he said that the non-bumiputera were not happy with the 30 percent bumiputera equity allocation because it meant having to give up what they had worked hard for.

"In any case, much of this (bumiputera equity) is 'easy come easy go'. The equity holders receive their share and sell it off...so what are we left with? Only our underwear.

"So now we are looking to invest in companies that are capable...I no longer want these struggling companies that keep asking for hand-outs year in and year out," he said.

