

**Hisham downplays furore over BN amendments**  
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he controversial changes to the BN constitution were in one of the earlier drafts of the amendments, says the coalition's constitution amendments committee chairperson Hishammuddin Hussein.

"The draft needs to be agreed upon before it can be a proposed amendment... Today, I submitted the fourth draft that the committee had worked on and prepared in the past months.

"This time, we have the consensus (on the amendments) and I will table the draft in hand at the supreme council meeting tomorrow," he said.

hishammuddin hussein home ministry 140409 talkingHishammuddin (left) said this in response to past suggestions to do away with BN's long-practiced consensus mechanism and replace it with a majority-based agreement system, among others.

It was also widely reported that the proposed direct BN membership in the draft had caused concerns that component parties could be rendered irrelevant.

Speaking to reporters after attending BN's management committee meeting, Hishammuddin said the final draft of the amendments would assure coalition members that the BN will remain "inclusive".

The meeting was chaired by BN deputy chairperson Muhyiddin Yassin.

Taking a potshot at the mess in opposition PKR's direct party elections, Hishammuddin said BN was being "realistic about the changes" that were being mooted.

"In BN, we consider the situation on the ground and the logistics before implementing anything," he said.

No voting rights for 'Friends of BN'

Meanwhile, it was also made apparent that the amendments proposed would not give voting rights to friends, associates or allies admitted into the coalition.

mca 140910 chua soi lekMCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek (right) gave this assurance to coalition members.

"There are different views on the matter, but it will be sorted out tomorrow. That's why the meeting (today) was only for an hour," Chua said.

"Everyone agreed that we can accept 'friends of BN', but the role given them will be scrutinised," he said.

Chua added that the BN was yet to finalise whether these members would be allowed to attend BN council meetings.

'Friends of BN' is the offshot of an idea to allow individuals to become members of BN,

without joining any of its component parties.

However, the original idea has generated opposition from the component parties because they are worried that 'Friends of BN' will be allowed to contest in the general elections.

It is understood that due to the protests, 'Friends of BN' will only be used as an official lable for non-governmental organisations and clubs.

About 2,000 BN delegates from all over the country are expected to attend the 13-member coalition's convention on Nov 28.

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