

**Muhyiddin: Be 'courageous' to deal with racial issues**  
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Umno today proposed five transformation measures to strengthen Barisan Nasional's (BN) struggle, including strengthening its organisational structure at the state, divisional and polling district levels to ensure efficient functioning of the BN machinery at all times.

Deputy Prime Minister and Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin said with a stronger organisational structure, BN's programmes could be intensified collectively by the component parties.

"Such programmes are important in our effort to promote the spirit of togetherness and sense of belonging among BN party members, especially at the grassroot level," he said on behalf of Umno during the winding-up of the BN Convention at Wisma MCA, KL.

Besides that, he said, in line with the people-friendly approach and in being responsive to the people's aspirations, various people-oriented programmes involving welfare, education, health, sports, culture and economy must be carried out more effectively through the collective involvement of BN component parties.

He said BN should also initiate strategic networking with groups that represent various levels of society in the educational, economic, social, cultural, religious, youth, sports, welfare and other fields, and which share BN's struggle and goals.

"This is in line with the amendments to the BN constitution which allow direct membership to individuals and non-government organisations," said Muhyiddin.

He said the amendments had opened wide the opportunity for every Malaysian, regardless of race and religion, to accept BN as a political platform.

On the fifth measure, Muhyiddin said the time had come for BN to take the courageous step to move further forward in dealing with sensitive issues related to race and religion, which were considered taboo in Malaysia's plural society.

He also said that BN's performance in the elections would depend on how the people judged BN as a party with the political legitimacy or as one that qualified to rule.

"This is where the real challenge lies for us, that is, to maintain our political legitimacy and to be judged positively by the people who are also experiencing changes in their thinking, attitude, lifestyle and political views."

Muhyiddin said Umno would always be fair to the other races and consult the other component parties to reach consensus on matters that involved the interest of all races.

- Bernama

