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Umno clubs to examine social contract

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Overseas Umno Clubs alumni will examine the social contract formulated by the country's founding fathers and look at ways to address rising concerns pertaining to religion, education and the special privileges of the Malays.

Met after the opening of the 8th alumni general assembly and

roundtable discussion on education 50 years into independence yesterday, alumni deputy chairman Datuk Mohamad Rais Zainuddin said these concerns cannot be swept under the carpet, but instead "we have to sit down and discuss, evaluate and strengthen this social contract".

He said a committee, represented by 48 professionals and academics, has been set up to draw up a road map on such matters.

"This committee will formulate a road map outlining future expectations on various matters like social, economic, cultural and educational changes," he said.

The first meeting will be held before the fasting month.

"Our discussions and deliberations will be forwarded to the party leaders before the Umno general assembly (in November)," Mohamad Rais said.

Earlier, in his keynote address at

the opening of the alumni's general assembly, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also the agriculture and agro-based industry minister, said the founding fathers formulated the social contract among the various races, which is reflected in the Federal Constitution.

However, he said, future generations may not want to be tied down by the "cultural baggage of the past".

"The situation now is far different from that during independence days and when the Federal Constitution was formulated," he said.

"We are worried because there are signs that if this issue is not managed properly, it may lead to social unrest and disagreements."

Asked later if the social

contract and religious and racial issues are being discussed freely due to the government giving more freedom of expression, Muhyiddin said: "This is good because if people do not voice it out, we will not hear what they have in their hearts. However, even this should be done within certain limits.

"Use this opportunity given by our prime minister to debate these issues intellectually and not emotionally. Don't just talk about the needs of your own race. Be open and accept the views of others also."