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Six Es to boost youth's power

EMPOWERMENT: Najib unveils govt drive to improve their role

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday outlined six key initiatives that must be undertaken by the government to further empower youth in the country.

Najib, during a speech while officiating Majlis Belia Malaysia's (MBM) 63rd annual general meeting here, said the government was "a government for all youth" in the country.

"Last year's 2015 Budget, for example, takes into account the needs and wants of youth in the country. All these are efforts by the government to create a better future for them."

Najib said the government would adhere to the "6Es", which he said were crucial towards creating a high-skilled and competitive society in the future.

"The first 'E' is engagement; the youth want their government to engage them. To that end, we need to create several platforms to gather as much feedback as possible from them."

Najib said the inaugural sitting of the Malaysian Youth Parliament at the Dewan Rakyat recently was one of many efforts by the government to provide a platform for youth to voice their opinions.

"And now, we also have the social media, which has indirectly created a big and influential platform to help us engage with the younger generation," said Najib, who is an active Facebook and Twitter user.

He said although Malaysian youth

today subscribed to different world views, he was confident that the future leaders of the country wanted to contribute to Malaysia's success.

"That is why the second 'E', empowerment, must be given due importance. This includes providing more opportunities for youth in various career paths," he said, adding that aspiring leaders should be given a chance to gain experience in Parliament or state assemblies.

Najib said while the National Service (NS) programme was an excellent platform to empower youth, there was a need to review the curriculum and effectiveness.

"NS is a three-month course and after the trainees leave, how long will their spirit of patriotism last? Besides inculcating patriotism, we also want to prepare youth to become high-come earners. Therefore, the Youth and Sports Ministry, along with the Defence Ministry, will come up with a new NS curriculum where youth can learn skills needed to have higher marketability."

Najib said the government would also place emphasis on creating a knowledge-based "Economy", where Malaysian youths from all backgrounds and race would be given equal opportunity to succeed.

"In Australia, for example, Malaysians with PhDs are offered permanent residence without needing to apply for one. If Malaysia wants to develop, we should not look at a person's skin colour, but rather his talent."

Najib said the government should also promote "Entrepreneurship" and social "Enterprises" among business-savvy youths.

"Instead of looking for jobs, youth



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** launching Majlis Belia Malaysia's 63rd annual general meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him are Youth and Sports Minister **Khairy Jamaluddin** (third from left) and MBM president **Mohamed Maliki Mohamed Rapiee** (right). Bernama pic

can also seek to generate jobs. That is why a paradigm shift is required. If we can generate wealth, we can add more value to the country's economy.

"We should aim to generate wealth not for private wealth, but to enable enterprises to create more activities that can benefit the community. That is social enterprising."

"Last but not least, youth must gain a variety of experiences and not the same experience 20 times. If they can do that, then the youth can

enrich themselves as leaders," Najib said.

Present during his speech were Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, his deputy, Datuk M. Saravanan, and MBM president Mohamed Maliki Mohamed Rapiee.

When commenting on the terror attack in Paris on Jan 7, Najib said the lack of respect for religious sensitivities would bring about "severe repercussions".

He said there was a limit to freedom of speech.

"We cannot follow absolute free-

dom. If you want a peaceful world, we have to be responsible in our actions. If you criticise other religions in the name of freedom, there will be severe repercussions," he said in his speech.

Najib said while all forms of violence and murder were strictly prohibited in religion, there would be some individuals who would react with violence when their religion was not respected.

"If Islam has its religious sensitivities, so do other faiths like Christians, Hindus and Buddhists."