

FOCUS ON FORM 6

Govt improving system to give non-Bumi students fair education access

KULIM: The Education Ministry is improving its application system to higher-learning institutions to ensure fair access for non-Bumiputera students to further their studies.

Its minister, Fadhlina Sidek, said while the unity government was retaining the Malay and Bumiputera quota in education, efforts had been taken to improve the existing application system for non-Bumiputera students.

"Yes, we are on the same page with what said by the prime minister (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim), but at the same time, at the Education Ministry, we have various improvements on the system (for non-Bumiputera students). I wish to give our assurance that we will never sideline any race.

"The improvements are vital and we are looking in particular at Form 6 to make sure all our children have equal access to education, so that no one will be left behind," she said after closing the national-level Innovation and Robotic Competition (Inoro 2023)

at Kolej Vokasional Kulim here yesterday.

On Saturday, Anwar said the Malay and Bumiputera quota system in education must be maintained to balance the number of students from the community in higher-learning institutions.

Anwar has said this during a question-and-answer session at the *Temu Anwar* programme at Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Anwar said if the system was not retained, it could cause an imbalance in the number of Malays, who form the majority of Bumiputeras, in these institutions and in certain disciplines.

The National Professors Council said that the quota system for Malays and Bumiputeras in national education was part of the country's affirmative action, which was provided for under Ar-



Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr Teo Kok Seong



Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek with winners of the national-level Innovation and Robotic Competition (Inoro 2023) at Kolej Vokasional Kulim yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

title 153 of the Federal Constitution.

MPN senior fellow Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr Teo Kok Seong said this affirmative action also existed in several countries, and was important to ensure that the demographics of a country was represented at all levels.

Teo said that Malaysia, without exception, had been found to implement it fairly, and the non-Malay and Bumiputera groups had not been left out in terms of opportunities, which could be seen in the various options available, including the National Higher Education Fund Corporation Education Loan Scheme.

"The quota system in the field of education and others is actu-

ally a positive action. This is because, apart from being able to help the backward groups, it also spurs national unity and national integration.

"This happens after social deficits, particularly in the gaps between ethnicity, social class and urban-rural areas, are narrowed through affirmative action by the country, especially through the quota system," said Teo, who is also Malaysian Future Institute (Masa) honorary fellow, as quoted by Bernama.

He said affirmative action stated under Article 153 of the Federal Constitution could be considered a permanent guarantee to Malays and Bumiputeras in the field of national education, which they would have special position through this quota system.

"The Malay and Bumiputera

quota is the basis for ensuring the involvement of students from these two groups, who are found to be lagging behind in the field of education compared with students from other ethnic groups, so that they will not continue to be left behind," he said.

As such, he said, the groups must take full advantage of the privileges to continue to be successful in their careers as professionals, and refute those who say that the Malay and Bumiputera quota had failed to produce excellent students and professionals.

"Therefore, they will need to work hard in their studies, not only to achieve excellent results for themselves, but also to prove that they are just as good, or even better when given the opportunity," he said.