

'Deliberate policy' needed to produce KDM entrepreneurs

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Nazri (standing at centre) and Wences beside him witnessing the MoU signing.

By CHRIS MASKILONE

KOTA KINABALU: There must be a "deliberate policy" to get more people from small ethnic groups such as the Kadazandusun Murut (KDM) in Sabah to be involved in entrepreneurial schemes for bumiputeras.

"Since I was in the Ministry, I have noted that the majority of bumiputeras participating are Malays and this has inevitably resulted in the other bumiputeras from small ethnic groups lagging behind," said Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

If participation is based on merit it will be the same story because the Malays are far ahead and larger in numbers, he said.

"Without a deliberate policy the KDM in Sabah and Iban in Sarawak will be left behind. There must be a specific instruction from my office that in training like this we have a 50-50 (quota) for the bumiputera

Muslim and non-Muslim bumiputera," he said after witnessing the signing of an MoU here Monday.

Nazri said this when asked to elaborate on his speech requesting 50 per cent of the candidates selected for the Entrepreneurial Development Scheme for Sabah Bumiputera Graduates to be non-Muslim bumiputeras.

Similarly, he said he had also resorted to deliberate policy when approving Mara sponsorships for the non-Muslim bumiputera and that at times he "had to lower the qualification otherwise they would not be able to cope with the Malays".

Nazri said such policy was also the norm when the government wanted Malays to compete with the non-bumiputeras.

"The Malays would not have come up with what they have today if not for the deliberate policy, so the same must be applied to the non-Muslim bumiputera," he said.

Meanwhile, in his speech he said hoped that the scheme could also be implemented in other higher learning institutions.

He said the scheme would greatly assist in reducing the unemployment rate in the country of which 60 per cent are bumiputeras.

The scheme is a collaboration between Nazri's Ministry, Sabah State Economic Development Corporation (Sedco) and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

The intensive eight-week course in UMS and a three-week attachment programme in public or private organisations is being offered to jobless bumiputera graduates.

UMS will provide the accommodation for the duration of the course while Sedco will come up with the allowances during the course and attachment programme for the trainees.

Upon completion, the trainees could embark on their own business using own capital or apply for funding from the financial agencies under the Ministry.

Sedco Group General Manager Datuk Pg Mohd Hussein Mohd Tahir Nasruddin signed an MoU on the scheme with UMS represented by its Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon.

The UMS has on its part set up an Entrepreneurial Development and Research Centre for a more dynamic and systematic implementation of the scheme.

Nazri also handed offer letters to 15 successful applicants who later took their oaths.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Wences Angang in his speech said the State government welcomed such endeavour because it would lead to the uplifting of bumiputera entrepreneurs' standards in Sabah.

Wences who is also Industrial Development Minister and responsible for Sedco urged more funds from the Federal government through Nazri's Ministry for similar purposes in Sabah.