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Law-Council

GOVT WILL LOOK INTO ENVIRONMENT NGOS' CALL, SAYS LAW

KUALA LUMPUR, June 11 (Bernama) -- The government will look into the environmental non-governmental organisations' call for the setting up of the National Council for Sustainable Development, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today.

He said, initially the government felt that the existing National Council on Development was sufficient to handle the country's sustainable development task.

However, the environmental NGOs' fear was that the council's focus might be more on development rather than environmental aspect to promote the sustainable development, he told reporters after a three-hour dialogue between the ministry officials and NGOs representatives here.

This was one of the important topics discussed at the dialogue attended by 24 representatives from 16 NGOs at the ministry.

They were also briefed by the minister on the government's plan to set up an inter-state/agency committee to oversee the development of highlands in the country under the National Land Council.

Law said the government was unlikely to set up a separate council on highland development as it felt that such development could be included under the responsibilities of the land council.

He also said the draft of the National Environment Policy, now in the final stage, would be submitted to the Cabinet soon.

Meanwhile, Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia (EPSM) Advisor Gurmit Singh said the proposed council on sustainable development should comprise representatives from Federal Government, State Governments, senior civil servant and NGOs.

This would allow participation from various groups as the the National Council on Development, which is chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was made up of Cabinet members only, he said.

He said the National Council for Sustainable Development would be an important institutional framework to ensuring a balance between development and environment. -- BERNAMA

JM ABG