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Anwar-Entrepreneurs

MALAYSIAN MALAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TOLD TO STUDY GOVERNMENT POLICIES

KUALA LUMPUR, June 29 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today proposed that the Malaysian Malay Chamber of Commerce set up a secretariat to study the various government policies to ensure that they are in line with the country's objective to produce dynamic Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

Anwar, who is Finance Minister, said that he would raise the matter with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad before seeking the Cabinet's approval.

Opening the Chamber's 31st annual general meeting here, he said that relevant government agencies would also be directed to hold discussions with the Chamber to help overcome problems faced by Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

The new approach would enable the government obtain feedback from the Chamber to assist in its efforts to set up a Bumiputera Industrial and Commercial Community, he added.

Also present were Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and the Chamber's president, Tan Sri Yahya Ahmad.

Earlier in his speech, Yahya suggested that a mechanism be set up to monitor the implementation of relevant policies.

He said that the Chamber was prepared to carry out such functions and report to Umno and the government any weaknesses and shortcomings that would hinder the attainment of the nation's objective.

Anwar said that the secretariat should also determine whether Bumiputera-owned conglomerates have sufficiently carried out their social responsibilities to the community including creating economic opportunities to Bumiputeras.

He criticised several such conglomerates which tend to set up a large number of subsidiaries whereas opportunities could be offered to other Bumiputeras.

The government adopts a positive approach towards the successes of such conglomerates, expecting them to also adopt a similar approach towards their social responsibilities, he said.

The time has come for such conglomerates to discard the tendency of basing all their moves and actions on profits to be made, he added.

Anwar said other countries have laws to ensure that conglomerates assist entrepreneurs in starting small ventures.

He said that although there are no such laws in the country, conglomerates should have a wider agenda.

Successful Bumiputera entrepreneurs should actively assist the government in its responsibility to help other entrepreneurs upgrade their capabilities, he added.

Anwar said that the government would not shirk its responsibility as it is a long way before the objective of producing dynamic Bumiputera entrepreneurs could be achieved.

Efforts to upgrade the capabilities of Bumiputera entrepreneurs needed to be intensified because although some have been successful, they are generally still far behind, he added.

Anwar also criticised several government agencies set up to assist Bumiputeras claiming to implement measures for the sake of Bumiputeras but were actually of no benefit to them.

As an example, he said, an agency which was allocated RM60 million,

used up RM40 million for other purposes including its own operations and to acquire equipment.

The agency, identified as "Agency X", only spent RM20 million for the purposes intended, he said.

Anwar however said that the government would not yet close down such agencies although they have not met their objectives.

He denied talk that he and Dr Mahathir planned to transfer the funds of such agencies to projects like the Bakun hydroelectric project and the Kuala Lumpur City Centre project.

Anwar later witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Chamber and Universiti Malaya under which the university will assist the Chamber in human resources development.

The MoU was signed by Yahya and the university's vice chancellor, Datuk Dr Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad. -- BERNAMA

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