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Musa - NEAC

NEAC MUST OFFER COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE, SAYS MUSA

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 27 (Bernama) -- Former Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam hopes the proposed National Economic Action Council (NEAC) will take a good hard look at the problems Malaysia is facing now and come up with a comprehensive package to overcome them.

"What is not (rpt not) needed is what I call +nibbling+ or the offering of solutions in bits and pieces ... they are not only bad in terms of (wanting to restore) confidence to the people and the business community but are also confusing," he said.

"So I hope the formation of this council would really give this comprehensive package -- that this is the problem, this is the way to overcome it, this is what the government is going to do."

Musa was speaking to reporters after opening the Asean Congress on Media Laws and Policies at a hotel here today.

The formation of the NEAC was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after a special meeting of the UMNO Supreme Council on Nov 20 and it was endorsed by the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council the following day.

According to Dr Mahathir, the council, which is to be set up next month, would be given powers by the Cabinet to make decisions pertaining to the national economy but would still have to report to the Cabinet from time to time.

Musa, who is the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group and the Leader of the Malaysian Delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, said he believed that a comprehensive package to overcome problems could go a long way.

"Statements don't help, I am sorry to say, even statements by a very influential personality don't seem to help, simply because the business community and indeed the Malaysian population, who have any interest whatsoever in the business going on in the country, are hard-nosed people now and they are dealing with their money.

"Whatever you say, they know the situation and they are very cautious because once beaten twice shy," Musa said.

He said that personalities who were in a position to offer very objective and constructive formulas to help overcome the economic problems should be invited to serve on the NEAC.

"I am not talking about myself ... I am not interested ... don't say that Musa is trying to promote himself. But there are lots of talent outside, those who have nothing to lose or to gain, who could sit on it and give proper advice," he said.

Musa said the formation of the NEAC was an indication that the government was trying to reduce what he termed as the "denial factor."

He said the "denial factor", which he explained as "continuously denying that something is wrong with us and that we are the ones that caused it" had been too high in Southeast Asia.

Musa also hoped that the government's action in tackling the economic problems would be in accordance with the popular Malaysian and Asian notion that the interests of the community must come before the interests of individuals.

Asked for his views on the attack by the Western media on Dr Mahathir lately, Musa said criticisms of national leaders by the media were nothing new and Malaysians should not pay too much attention or be obsessed with

them.

What Malaysia could do was to concentrate on its weaknesses and try to put them right, thus giving the Western media less points to criticise the country, he said. -- BERNAMA

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