

14 NOV 1998

Lim-Rubber

GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE SIZE OF RUBBER SMALLHOLDING

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 14 (Bernama) -- The government plans to increase the size of rubber smallholding under a programme to restructure the country's rubber industry to provide appropriate income to smallholders, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today.

He said that under the programme the smallholders, the majority of whom have 1.2 ha of smallholding, would be given an additional five to six hectares of land.

The ministry would seek the cooperation of Rural Development Ministry and Risda to identify smallholders concerned, he told reporters after chairing the monthly meeting of Gerakan Central Committee at party's headquarters, here.

Dr Lim said the restructuring was necessary due to the declining prices of rubber with no sign of improving in the near future, threatening the livelihood of smallholders who produced 80 per cent of the country's rubber.

"If no immediate step is taken to help them, their income will be below the poverty level," he said.

He said smallholders would also be encouraged to use modern system of tapping rubber to yield more latex while employing less tappers.

On the politics, Dr Lim who is Gerakan president reiterated the party's support to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the people should not be misled by the call for political reform shouted by supporters of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim or Gerak.

"They are actually opportunists, taking advantage of certain weaknesses of the government for their own interest or of their group and not of the people," he said.

Lim said the people should rally behind the government in its efforts to fight the economic downturn.

--BERNAMA

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