

19 AUG 1998  
Tax-Reaction  
MTUC, CUEPACS LAUD MOVE NOT TO RAISE TAXES

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) and Cuepacs which together represent more than 1.4 million workers in the private and public sectors have welcomed the government's decision not to raise taxes in the 1999 National Budget.

MTUC president Zainal Rampak said today the appropriate move was based on the government's wish not to burden the people.

"This is a wise decision especially when we are grappling with the current economic turmoil," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Yesterday Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government had no plans to raise taxes in the 1999 National Budget to be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat this October.

Dr Mahathir had said increasing taxes during the current economic crisis would only only burden the people.

Zainal said the MTUC would submit to the government soon a set of proposals for consideration in next year's budget.

Among matters to be included were the urgent need to construct more low-cost houses and maintaining the public health and education services at the affordable level.

"We also hope there will be no hike in water, electricity and sewerage service tariffs," he added.

Cuepacs secretary-general N.Siva Subramaniam said the decision reflected the government's sensitivity to problems faced by the people even though some other countries crippled by the economic crisis had resorted to raising taxes.

He said Cuepacs would submit its views and proposals for the 1999 National Budget within the next two weeks.

"We will stress the importance of protecting the workers' interest in government's efforts to revive the economy," he said.

-- BERNAMA  
HJ ZUL AAM