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PNB-GROWTH

PNB CONFIDENT OF GROWTH IN NET INVESTMENTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) is confident of achieving growth in the net investment of its funds despite the slump in the stock market, chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid said.

However, there is still a gap in investments among bumiputras and non-bumiputras, he said.

To this end, he said he hoped that the announcement of a 9.8 percent dividend for Amanah Saham Wawasan 2020 will inculcate a sense of security in investments among existing unitholders and encourage those who have to yet to invest in its unit trusts.

"To me, a 10.1 percent dividend last year and 9.8 this year provide sufficient confidence that we are safeguarding the value of the investment," he said.

So, it very much depends on those who have already invested to enhance the performance of PNB," he told reporters after announcing on behalf of the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the ASW 2020's dividend payment held here today.

Also present was PNB's Group Chief Executive, Hamad Kama Piah Che Othman.

"Without casting any aspersion on other schemes, I will say ASW 2020 is a very attractive scheme and hope that the 9.8 percent (dividend) will be a good benchmark in creating more confidence to unitholders during the current economic setback," he said.

He also hoped to see the balance of the investment in the ASW 2020 allocated for bumiputra (RM1,205.50 million) and non-bumiputra (RM229.60 million) to be taken up soon, but again it would depend on factors such as investors' confidence.

"If PNB can continue to declare dividends at the rate we use to announce over the years, we are confident that the unitholders will regard to use our unit trust as a form of saving during rainy days," he said.

Ahmad Sarji also urged the unitholders to maintain their dividend as he felt that ASW 2020 was stable and profitable in a long-term period.

Meanwhile Hamad Kama Piah said, since it was launched two years ago, the scheme had shown a tremendous growth of 20 percent in terms of the number of investors.

In terms of states, Selangor has the most unit sold with 317 million, followed by Federal Territory (221 million), Perak (161 million), Sabah (160 million) Johor (134 million) and Sarawak (121 million).

To this end, Ahmad Sarji said that PNB was happy with the number of unitholders adding that "we want to administer and manage the money prudently and bring good returns to investors".

Asked on the dividend forecast for ASW 2020 next year, Ahmad Sarji said: "It will depend entirely on market forces. If the market swings and shares appreciates, we can declare higher dividend".

However, Ahmad Sarji was optimistic that the current economic downturn would recover and that it was just a matter of time. -- BERNAMA

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