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Support needed for new agriculture policy

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - The Federal Government needs the support from all States to ensure the successful implementation of the proposed Third National Agriculture Policy.

Deputy Agriculture Minister Datuk Tengku Mahmud Mansur said a co-ordinated effort between the relevant Federal and State agencies was crucial as projects implemented covered all the States.

Speaking after a meeting with heads of departments and agencies in Sabah, he said the agriculture policy was expected to be tabled for approval by the Cabinet soon.

Tengku Mahmud said Sabah and Sarawak could make a significant contribution towards the proposed policy which emphasised the participation of the private sectors.

"The two States have vast tracts of land suitable for agricultural and fisheries development," he said.

The Sarawak State Government has already agreed to provide a massive area of land to Bernas for padi plantation on an integrated basis.

Bernas has initiated discussion with the Sabah Government to acquire land for the purpose.

"My Ministry will be in close contact with State Ministers and Exco members in charge of agriculture and fisheries to identify suitable projects to be implemented under the proposed agriculture policy," Tengku Mahmud said.

He said Sabah and Sarawak were also suitable for the integrated oil palm plantation and cattle farming development programme launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Johor Baru recently.

Tengku Mahmud said his Ministry would also take full advantage of the deep sea fishing opportunities in Sabah and Sarawak.

However, he said only companies with financial capability of going into downstream activities would be considered for deep sea fishing licences.

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