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Abdullah-Ministers

ATTENDANCE COMPULSORY AT PROJECT MONITORING MEETINGS

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6 (Bernama) -- Attendance by ministers is compulsory at the fortnightly monitoring of progress of development projects undertaken by their ministries, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said this has been decided by yesterday's Cabinet meeting and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had directed that there should be no exception for ministers.

"Obviously ministers, senior officers like the secretary-general and director-general will have to be involved especially when immediate decision has to be made," he said.

Abdullah said this at a press conference after a two-hour dialogue with administrative and diplomatic service officers here today.

He was asked to comment on a news report that the role of some senior ministry officers in monitoring the progress of development projects was much to be desired.

Abdullah acknowledged that certain ministers and key officers of their ministries were not highly involved in monitoring projects under their supervision.

He said projects for which funds had already been allocated should get greater attention.

"We don't want to see a high shortfall by year end and be saddled with substantial funds unused because of bureaucratic bottlenecks or project delays," he said.

Abdullah reminded administrative and diplomatic service officers that they were duty-bound to report periodically to the Implementation and Coordination Unit the status of projects handled by them.

They were also reminded to carry out quickly decisions of the National Economic Action Council, (NEAC), of which Abdullah is deputy chairman, so that national economic recovery would follow a charted course.

Abdullah said he expected government officers to make the most of meetings and consultations to air their views regardless of their departmental positions.

"We value views from officers, be they superiors or subordinates... if they are involved in a meeting they're free to forward constructive opinions and make objective assessments albeit critical, for mutual benefit," he said.

Asked on what transpired at today's closed-door meeting, Abdullah said the officers raised several questions and they in turn got his response and views.

"It was a useful dialogue. It not only enabled me to understand their problems. So did all those present," he said, commending the administrative and diplomatic service for its crucial contribution to Malaysia's progress.

He said the service was highly experienced in running the establishment had helped a multi-racial nation prevailed through tribulations and challenges, including the May 13 racial riots and the sporadic economic and financial crises over the years.

Abdullah suggested that Intan, the national institute of public administration and the Economic Planning Unit, among others, make efforts to have these experiences documented for future reference.

These documented experiences would come in handy for young officers having to face similar situations later, he said.

Also present at the dialogue were the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali and Public Service Director-General Datuk Samsudin Osman.

It was jointly organised by Intan and the Administrative and Diplomatic Service Association.

-- BERNAMA

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