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14-point directive on ethics (HL)

PUTRAJAYA, Fri. - Cabinet Ministers have been directed to carry out their duties with collective responsibility, loyalty, efficiency and dedication.

They have also been told not to have any business interest and to relinquish any position held in companies.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today the directive was among 13 aspects of responsibility and 14 points related to ethics issued by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the first meeting of the new Cabinet on Dec 15.

Abdullah said the Government did not want the people to say that Ministers directed their officers to be ethical and good but there was no one to tell them to be likewise.

"They must not have links with family businesses and when there are discussions about those businesses, they (the Ministers) must let their connections be known and leave (the Cabinet meeting)," Abdullah said.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing a committee on good governance at the Prime Minister's Department here.

"Ministers are to carry out their duties loyally with dedication and according to the Barisan Nasional manifesto and fulfil all promises made in it," he said.

Abdullah said Ministers were also told to discuss procedures with their staff and identify those that delayed projects which must be done away with.

"Ministers must also have a procedure manual to ensure that work is done efficiently and according to procedure and their ministries must have daily meetings to solve problems and see to progress made," he said.

Also Ministers must follow up and know the actual situation about instructions on implementation given to officers and the status of projects.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir had also called for Ministries to have Quality Control Circles (QCCs) to better serve the people.

Abdullah also said the Government would step up measures to counter corruption while ensuring that baseless accusations of corruption were not made.

"We must ensure that the accusations are with basis as sometimes there is the assumption that people in power tend to be corrupt," he said, adding that those who made baseless accusations could also be hauled up.

He said corruption could not be allowed to prevail as it was detrimental to society and Government servants must be made aware of its perils.

Also discussed was bad behaviour and social ills among the country's youths and it was decided that the biggest problem was drugs and a Cabinet committee would look into the matter. Abdullah said the committee also decided that the Government should have an Electronic Fund Payment (EFP) to make its payments.

"Money to be paid by the Government would go straight to the bank and this would do away with things like vouchers and cheques," he said, adding that among others the payments would be for allowances and government contractors.

The system, to be implemented next year, would also reduce the possibility of fraud, mistakes and delays and help to streamline accounting.

Among those who attended the meeting were Primary Industries Minister

Datuk Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob (Information Minister), Tan Sri Musa Mohamad (Education Minister), Datuk Azmi Khalid (Rural Development) and Ministers in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, Datuk Dr Rais Yatim and Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali.

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