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DPM plans tour to check on projects

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DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is planning a nationwide tour to ensure the smooth implementation of government projects in the various districts.

"I will make several visits to some of the districts as soon as possible," he told reporters after attending a dialogue with 230 district officers and senior development officers held in conjunction with a two-day national conference which ended in Bangi yesterday.

Abdullah said the visits would help him understand better the problems faced in the implementation of such projects and help him to solve them "on the spot".

Abdullah, who is also the chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Rural Development, said the committee will discuss the recommendations and comments made by the district officers and senior state development officials at its meeting today.

In trying to ensure that projects are implemented immediately, Abdullah said the Government has identified a system whereby reports and feedback from district officers and senior development officials will eventually be submitted to the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) for speedy action.

"The information will first be processed by the Implementation and Coordination Unit in the Prime Minister's Department. The unit will then forward a detailed report to the NEAC," he said.

Since the district officers and senior development officials are at the end of the implementation line, Abdullah said it is their responsibility to ensure that government projects are carried out successfully.

"They must realise that these government projects are for the benefit of the people. Thus, it is their responsibility to make sure that such projects are carried out effectively and keep tabs on their progress," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when opening the conference on Monday, had directed district officers to make sure that government allocations for development projects are fully utilised.

There is currently a shortfall in the utilisation of development allocation set aside under the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000).

Dr Mahathir had also said the Government is reviewing the existing financial administration system, aimed at speeding up the implementation of projects and cutting red tape.

Abdullah also said the Federal Government will not put aside the input and feedback from district officers and senior state development officials as they are considered useful.

"The feedback and comments from district officers and senior development officials will serve as a guideline for us to identify the problems faced in implementing such projects," he said.

Abdullah also wants district officers and senior state development officials to reactivate the manual working procedures and table-filing system to ensure they would be able to keep track of the progress of government projects.

"These two systems are useful tools to help them speed up the implementation of projects and identify problems. They will have access to the relevant information pertaining to any project although they may have just been appointed as district officers," he said.

Abdullah also urged district officers to be more committed and have a sense of responsibility in carrying out government policies and programmes effectively. They should also adopt a leadership attitude in their work, he said.

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