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Abdullah-Government

GOVERNMENT MACHINERY MUST FUNCTION SMOOTHLY, SAYS ABDULLAH

ALOR SETAR, Jan 24 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi wants the government machinery to function in a smooth and dynamic manner to facilitate the quick implementation of projects

Government agencies, he said, must use the allocations for projects wisely so that the economic recovery process could be hastened.

Abdullah was speaking at a meeting with some 2,000 government officers and staff here today. Present were Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman and Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Kadir Sheikh Fadzir.

Calling for total cooperation from the people, he said measures taken by the government through its machinery were aimed at preventing the people from suffering as a result of the economic slowdown.

"Everyone has been squeezed by this problem, and the government acted responsibly by introducing measures for recovery although some people say they (the measures) are not popular," he said.

Abdullah said since the introduction of the measures by Prime Minister Menteri Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last September, the economy was heading towards a speedy recovery.

Indications of this are the uptrend in the stock market, expanding trade surplus and the RM3.8 billion worth of house sales achieved through the government's house ownership campaign.

He said the government felt Malaysia must come out with its own "medicine" to recover from the slowdown although the measures were not liked by certain quarters.

"We decided that the ringgit cannot be traded abroad and the exchange rate was fixed at RM3.80 to the US dollar, and this caused many Western economists and also some of our own people to be angry," he said.

Abdullah said the government did not want Malaysia to suffer the same fate as a neighbouring country that had depended on "foreign medicine" causing the situation to become worse with rising poverty, unemployment and inflation apart from political uncertainties.

-- BERNAMA

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