

04 AUG 1999

Mapen-Reaction

LAUNCH OF MAPEN II LAUDED, OPPOSITION REBUKED FOR BOYCOTTING

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- The launch of the Second National Economic Consultative Council (Mapen II) by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today has received all round applause and support especially for the nation's readiness in facing the new millenium.

Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said Mapen II was a continuation of Mapen I and all were hoping that it would lead to the country's economic revival.

"We will give it our full support," he said after the launch of the council.

On the opposition's boycott of the council, Khalid said they were only viewing it from their political perspectives and in the process had neglected their roles in national development.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Mapen II took into account the interest of all communities which needed special attention to ensure that none would feel left out in policies implemented in the future.

"Through this, I am confident that we will boost the nation's economy and maintain social unity and prosperity.

"It shows our approach is a comprehensive one and not only for the communities but taking into account all dimensions which required the government's attention," he said.

Royal Professor Ungku Aziz who is a Mapen member since its inception said he hoped to provide the contributions as called for by the Prime Minister.

"I have a lot of ideas which I will table in Mapen II and all is ready, only waiting for tabling tomorrow," he said.

On Mapen's boycott by the opposition, Ungku Aziz said it was actually up to them whether to join the council or the otherwise.

Another academician who is also a Mapen II member, Professor Dr Ismail Md Salleh said: "agriculture, entrepreneurship, globalisation and information technology were aspects which need to be viewed by Mapen from a new perspective," he said.

Ismail also rejected the notion that Mapen I was ineffective to the extent of leading to launch of Mapen II.

He said the opposition's move to stay away from Mapen II would be a loss to the nation.

The opposition might have their own perspectives which would be considered by the government if they participated in the council, he said.

Other Mapen II members when met had also expressed their regret over the opposition's refusal to join the council.

Senator Datuk Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman who represented Umno said: "Mapen II will draw out plans to strengthen the people's confidence not only in domestic competition but also in the global stage".

He said the opposition should have joined the council as they could provide constructive views on planning for the nation's development.

"We are sad that the opposition did not join (Mapen II) as this not a political issue, but to safeguard the race where all parties should play their role," he said.

Another Mapen II member, former Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen Ismail said: "as a Mapen II member, I will do what is necessary in the meeting as contribution to the nation and this council can be made the platform to discuss issues which may crop up in the

future," he said.

However Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) member who also sits in the council, Dr. Maximus Johnity Ongkili said his involvement was among the party's contribution for national development.

He said: "we can give positive contributions through the proper channel to voice our constructive opinion and criticisms and we hope PBS' views can be accepted by Mapen".

Cuepacs president N. Siva Subramaniam said Cuepacs would use the channels in Mapen II to submit various proposals related to civil servants.

Housing Developers Association President Datuk Eddy Chen said he would use the opportunity to voice matters pertaining to the industry as well as the shortage of low-cost houses.

-- BERNAMA

team zul