

01 JUL 2002

ABDULLAH-MARKET

MARKET HAS RESPONDED WELL TO TRANSITION PROCESS, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, July 1 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said the encouraging response from the private sector and Malaysians at large has proved that the recently announced leadership transition process was well-accepted.

"I am very happy (with the response). It just proves that what (the Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) has in mind to ensure a smooth transition (of power) has been accepted very well by the Malaysians and the private sector," he said after opening the Malaysian e-Government 2002 conference here today.

"The market response has been very encouraging," he said when asked to comment on his view of the market's response to the announcement of the transition period of 16 months.

When asked to comment on some of the financial failures that involved large dotcom companies in the United States, Abdullah said corporate governance was an important issue because if it was not given appropriate attention, it would not only affect the stock market but other companies as well.

He stressed that corporate governance was something that needed to be stressed upon as the most important objective all the time.

Abdullah hoped that all Malaysian companies would adhere to corporate governance and there would not be similar examples of the failed US companies in Malaysia.

"That is an issue we must always avoid," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Abdullah said the government had remained focused on bringing government services and implementing pilot projects as part of the e-government flagship.

He said the government had established a shared services outfit in Putrajaya to focus on establishing a common and integrated information technology infrastructure with consistent quality.

"We are now in a position to look ahead to the future to determine our direction as an e-government," he said.

Abdullah said the implementation of any e-government initiative required a focus on continuous improvement efforts.

"The usage and adherence to global benchmark practices are on the rise, but will need to become further embedded in many e-government projects," he added.

Abdullah also noted that relationships between the government and the private sector should continue to be fostered, both with the established providers as well as with the fast-growing small local companies, including the smaller, innovative firms, many of which were presently led by young and capable professionals.

The deputy prime minister also said the foundations for a competent information technology society in Malaysia must be built around future generations.

"IT education must begin at an early age -- it should no longer be considered as an elective subject in our school curriculum, but rather should be introduced as an essential subject. This will provide a head-start for our younger generations to cultivate their interest in the digital economy." -- BERNAMA

WNZ SHY

