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Abdullah-Council

MEMBERSHIP IN COUNCIL NOT LIMITED TO RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS ONLY

PENANG, March 9 (Bernama) -- Membership in the proposed National Ulama Consultative Council will not be restricted to religious scholars merely, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said people knowledgeable in relevant fields would be invited to sit in the council.

The government might invite sociologists, doctorates and information technology experts to sit in the council as consultants, he told reporters after attending the Penang Muslim League Hari Raya Aidil Adha open house.

For instance, he cited Royal Professor Ungku Aziz consulting the then Al-Azhar University Grand Sheikh for his views on the setting up of the Pilgrims' Fund Board (Tabung Haji).

The Al-Azhar University is in Cairo, Egypt.

Ungku Aziz is an economist while the Grand Sheikh is a renowned religious scholar, he said.

Abdullah said the meeting of the experts was necessary to reach a consensus on certain issues so that the decision would be acceptable to all.

"By having experts, the council can discuss religious issues objectively, he said.

He said he had asked Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin to propose suitable names to be members of the council.

The names would be submitted to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for approval, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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