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Survey Dayaks

DAYAK LEADERS WANT SAY IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME SURVEY

KUCHING, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- The Federal Government was today urged to invite leaders from Sarawak's Dayak Community to give inputs on the special household income survey being conducted on the Bumiputera minorities in Sarawak and Sabah to enable the findings to be more objective.

Sarawak Dayak Chamber of Commerce and Industry Secretary-General Datuk Peter Minos said the involvement of community leaders was vital in order to tackle the root causes of rural poverty among the Iban and Bidayuh people of Sarawak.

"It will be good if we know the details on the number and percentage of minorities, like the Dayaks, Kadazandusun and Orang Asli, their poverty and income level and compare it with that of the majority but it will be meaningless if the findings are biased", he told Bernama here.

As such, he said the government could engage the expertise of Dayak-based associations or political parties to help coordinate and facilitate the study, he said.

Minos, who is a former Dayak Bidayuh National Association (DBNA) president, said the findings must address the reasons why the Dayaks were left behind, including in the corporate world, so that strategies could be drawn up to improve the situation.

As such the survey needed to tackle the root causes of rural malnutrition, health, the lack of basic amenities like water and electricity and poorly run rural schools before addressing the symptoms, he said.

When tabling the mid-term review of the Eighth Malaysia Plan last month, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government would draw up more focused plans to alleviate poverty of the country's minority groups based on the survey's findings.

He said the first phase of the survey, covering nine minorities, had shown that incidence of poverty was highest among the Penan, Kenyah and Kajang communities in Sarawak.

In Sabah, the Rungus, Orang Ulu and Orang Sungai were among the poorest and so were the Orang Asli in the peninsula.

Minos said, for example, the Bidayuh community appreciated efforts being done by the government to improve its socio-economic status but the number venturing into business was still wanting at the moment.

-- BERNAMA

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