

## **BN goes 'fishing' with RM300mil special fund**

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**Nigel Aw**

Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Noh Omar has urged BN parliamentarians to expedite disbursement of a RM300 million special fund for fishermen to repair or build houses.

briefing for BN mps by Agriculture Minister Noh Omar on National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal "This is a touch-point project that we must do quickly. We have not received the money but I have ordered my secretary-general to use the ministry's money first," he said at a briefing for the MPs in Kuala Lumpur last night.

The fund for fishermen's housing is part of the 2012 budget tabled by Prime Minister and Finance Minister Najib Abdul Razak in Parliament last October.

Noh said the fund will be disbursed in three stages:

- For applications to repair existing houses
- For applications to build new houses
- For creation of fishing villages, for which funds will be channelled to state governments

"The first stage we must do immediately. We have issued 15,498 application forms (which) must be collected by the local fishermen's association and (submitted) to the Parliamentary Agriculture Development Council (MPPP)," he said.

The MPPP was created in 2009 to coordinate agricultural activities in parliamentary constituencies and is chaired by BN MPs. Opposition-held constituencies are chaired by local BN leaders.

Noh urged BN MPs to immediately convene MPPP meetings as only 2,600 of the 8,643 application forms that have been returned have received the council's stamp of support, for subsequent ministry approval.

"Don't complain to me that the fishermen's associations have arbitrarily selected the applicants, (or) that many PAS people are approved but BN people are not approved," he said.

"I depend on the MPPP's support, so I hope the MPPPs which have not yet convened a meeting (will) do so immediately."

Once the funds are disbursed to the MPPP account, the MPs must quickly disburse the funds to the relevant applicants, the minister said.

This could amount to RM5,000-10,000 each, depending on the quantum approved.

"You cannot cheat me because all MPPP accounts are under AgroBank. I can order a report and (will) know who has disbursed the funds and who has not."

'Fishermen should support BN'

Noh also said he would conduct a nationwide roadshow soon.

"We want to gather all the farmers and fishermen so that they will continue supporting BN".

In Kedah during the 2008 general election, he said, BN had lost in constituencies where there were many fishermen.

"This should not (have happened) because fishermen receive a lot of assistance (from the government)..."

We need to tell them so they realise how much help they are getting," he said.

In light of the next general election, Noh also advised all MPs to hand the fishermen's RM200 monthly allowance in cash.

"This is a chance for MPs to personally greet them... if possible, give cash, because if we deposit it into their account, then they would not feel it," he said.

The MPs present also collected cheques in agricultural allocations for their respective constituencies.

"We (Agriculture Ministry) should have received RM20 million, but in this year's budget we only got RM10 million...so tonight, we can only give out half, which is RM50,000 (for) each (constituency)," Noh added.

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