

## **Malay NGO urges PM to focus on output, not handouts**

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**By Lawrence Yong**

The Malay Economic Action Council (MTEM) has expressed hoped that Putrajaya's soon-to-be unveiled policies for greater bumiputera economic participation will not be focussed on handouts.

MTEM CEO Mohd Nizam Mahsha told Malaysiakini that new policies, to be announced this Saturday, should not be a kneejerk response to the general election results, which saw Umno garnering more votes from Malay voters.

NONE"Obviously, everyone knows that this is a response to the 13th general election and to influence the outcome of the upcoming Umno elections," said Mohd Nizam (left).

"But we don't want a proposal that is just a kneejerk reaction... there is no silver bullet... the government has already put in place programmes under its Economic Transformation Plan - Are those plans not addressing the problem?"

Mohd Nizam said that Malay business is generally confined to small-medium enterprises (SME) that were "micro and small" that need help to improve their output and are not looking for more handouts.

"Handouts will not serve the long term issues, " he said. "If merely handouts and not outcome-based programmes are implemented, then maybe the disparity between the rich and the poor will increase and this could impact on the stability of the country."

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is expected to reveal government plans to help improve human capital development as well as bumiputera equity and property ownership.

'Reinstate MECD'

Mohd Nizam said MTEM has consistently given feedback to the government about needs of the Malay businesses and how entrepreneurs were not getting the opportunity and support that they need.

Mohd Nizam said it was likely that past affirmative action plans such as New Economic Policy (NEP) and even its successor Economic Transformation Programme

(ETP) were not fully effective as it favoured a handful of big government-linked corporations and had resulted in leakages.

On MTEM's wishlist, he said, would be a reinstatement of the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development (MECD) as a one-stop centre for entrepreneurs. The MECD was abolished in 2009 and absorbed into eight other ministries.

On education, MTEM wished government would also address issue of Malay graduates who still have no confidence in themselves and were often timid. Training and skills given should closely match market needs, he said.

Finally, Mohd Nizam pointed out that the "perception" of any affirmative policy must also be carefully weighed as all Malaysians had a right to question where government money goes and what was the outcome.

"I am not saying that politicians shouldn't be doing business but the focus of any economic agenda to help bumiputras must also make business sense," Nizam said.

Overall, the government's economic policies should be focused more on raising Malay economic output and not just on quantifying how many have actually received help, he said.

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