

Time to reassess Taib, BN's policies, Adenan told
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SARAWAK ASSEMBLY Sarawak Opposition Leader Chong Chieng Jen called on the newly appointed Chief Minister Adenan Satem to divorce his government from the policies of the previous state administration if his government is to win public support, including the Chinese community.

Speaking on the Governor's address, Chong (left) who is the Kota Sentosa assembly person said an appraisal of existing government policies in the state is "timely" in view of the appointment of a new chief minister.

"It is high time we have to restore the moral authority of the government by standing up on corruption and nepotism and by eliminating dishonesty and self-enrichment among the inner circles of our political leaders.

"There are certain policies that ought to be changed such as policy on land alienation under which the previous government had alienated hundreds of thousands of acres of land to companies owned by family members and cronies of the political leaders of BN," he alleged.

Abdul Taib Mahmud, whose more than 30-year tenure at the helm was tinged with accusations of corruption, nepotism and abuse of power, was finally replaced by Adenan as chief minister on Feb 28.

Meanwhile, Chong said the process of awarding government contracts should be made more transparent and fair and carried out via open tender, so that they are not merely accorded to "crony companies".

Redistribute wealth to close rich-poor divide

On another point, he said that the state must redistribute its natural resources and wealth so as to close the gap between the rich and the poor, and between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in Sarawak.

Citing figures obtained from a Parliamentary reply on the number of poor and hard core poor families in Sarawak up to Sept 2013, Chong said there are some 24,973 poor families among the Ibans, Malays (12,727), Bidayuhs (4,855), Melanaus (4,038) and Penans (3,045).

"And if you attach an average of five persons per family there are about 270,000 people who are living under poverty or hard core poverty line.

"This is about 10 percent of Sarawak's population," said Chong, who is also Bandar Kuching

MP.

He said that if the poverty line index of RM830 of the country is taken into account, the number of households regarded as poor families could even be more, the situation made even more serious for a state that boasts of rich natural resources.

“I think this is not doing justice to our people, and as such there should be a redistribution of the natural resources based on income level and not based on race,” he added.

He also said Adenan should reinstate public confidence and trust in the meaning of democratic processes and rights.

“Recently I heard and read many statements made by our chief minister talking about the Chinese ought to support BN so that there should be Chinese ministers and more Chinese elected representatives in the BN.

“It just shows that the BN cannot think out of the box, that is, the Chinese must look after the Chinese community, the Malays looking after the Malay community, the Ibans looking after the Iban community.

“Isn’t our chief minister, a chief minister for all races, for all Sarawakians?” he said questioning the need for Chinese ministers and deputy ministers in Cabinet.

“They (Chinese ministers) have failed the Chinese community as such they have been rejected by the Chinese community either because of their own failure to bring out issues, to address the issues that are at the heart of the Chinese community or because of the result of BN’s policy as a whole,” he said.