

'No plan to replace BR1M with investment scheme'

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The government has no plan to replace the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) with any form of investment in the names of the recipients, the Dewan Negara was told today.

Deputy Finance Minister Chua Tee Yong said the BR1M was a short-term aid aimed at helping the low-income people to balance the rising cost of living with the purchase of daily necessities.

"The aid is given to all who are eligible regardless of race, religion and political background. The BR1M criteria is not based on the level of poverty but is aimed at providing a subsidy to the target group," he said when replying to a question from Senator Boon Som Inong.

Boon Som had asked whether the government intended to review the implementation of the BR1M scheme so that the assistance given could be replaced by investing the money under the name of the BR1M recipients in profitable businesses and enable them to receive dividends each year so that the government does not have to issue a new allocation.

Chua said the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund felt that giving a direct subsidy such as the BR1M was more beneficial than a blanket subsidy for all, which would include the high-income group as well.

"The government had previously provided blanket subsidies and that had been turned into an issue because the rich also enjoyed these subsidies.

"Our intention is not to give subsidies solely to the poor but to those who need to be helped," he said.

Chua said the objective of providing the aid was to raise the income of the people and drive the economy as well as generate domestic business growth.

Replying to a supplementary question from Senator Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki, on government plans to help the medium-income group burdened with the rising cost of goods, he said the government always implemented various programmes to raise the income of this group.

"Under the 11th Malaysia Plan, the government has set the objective of helping to raise the income, especially, of the medium-income group," he said.

- *Bernama*

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