

## **Zahid: Don't blame lopsided privatization jobs on this gov't**

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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today urged the people not to blame the current government for the lopsided privatisation contracts signed by the previous administration.

Without naming former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he likened the consequences of signing the contracts to "shit" that was rubbed on the people.

Zahid admitted that the highway and independent power plant contracts, as well as those of Express Rail Link (ERL) projects, were lopsided, which the current government was forced to observe.

"I don't want to name anyone. I don't want to lay blame on anyone," he said.

He reiterated that the people should share responsibility collectively with the government.

"Don't blame us and compliment only the previous one (administration)," he said. "Don't blame us for the shit rubbed (on you) previously."

"We should be together in arriving at a consensus - agree to agree and agree to disagree."

Zahid was speaking at the 2016 priorities declaration ceremony organised by Damai Sejahtera Foundation, which represented 50 NGOs.

Meanwhile, a university undergraduate has asked the government to issue public transport discount cards to students.

To this, Zahid said if the government were to give discount cards on ERL, then the government would have to compensate RM2.9 billion to the operator, Express Rail Link Sdn Bhd.

Zahid, who is also the foundation patron, listened to the grouses and suggestions made by the group, which pledged to act as the bridge between the government and the people, so that the government funds would be channelled to the targeted group.

One representative has called on the government to postpone its new projects and help those who are facing losses, and another wanted the government to give 748,000 elderly people discount cards, to enable them to enjoy 50 percent price reduction on goods and services.

## **Opportunities to bumi entrepreneurs**

They also suggested that adequate opportunities are given to bumiputera entrepreneurs for mega redevelopment projects such as Bandar Malaysia and Tun Razak Exchange (TRX),

Meanwhile, another representative demanded that the government allocate half of the RM160 million funds for NGOs, slated in Budget 2016, to the foundation.

Most of the representatives urged the government to decrease the cost of living and empower the people to attain better quality of life.

Zahid responded by announcing the setting up of a high-level committee to discuss the issue of cost of living.

"I will discuss with the prime minister to set up a high-level committee immediately. I nominate myself to chair the high-level committee," he said, adding that six ministers and secretaries-general will sit in the committee.

Hopefully, Zahid added, a meeting will be called on the first week of Jan, 2016.

He promised to invite the group to meet Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to voice their concerns.

"(As a country number two) I have to be the second good man, instead of the second man that brings difficulty (to the people)," he said.

Later at the press conference, the Umno vice-president said this committee will continue the efforts of his predecessor Muhyiddin Yassin, who himself chaired a high-level committee on cost of living.

Muhyiddin was removed from the cabinet five months ago at the height of the 1MDB fiasco.