

Felda: Ahmad prefers dialogue to debate
Malaysiakini.com
July 08, 2010

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Maslan shied away from National Children of Felda Settlers' Association's (Anak) challenge to debate on the alleged misappropriation of Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) funds.

ahmad maslan Instead, Ahmad (left) suggested a dialogue rather than a debate.

"Anak president Mazlan Aliman has invited me to a debate but I am giving him another invitation for a dialogue with him and the rest of Anak's committee members," said Ahmad.

The deputy minister, who is also the Muar member of Parliament, said that there is no pressing need for a debate as he normally sits in a dialogue with associations related to Felda matters.

"It is not that I'm not interested in a debate or that I'm scared, I have been debating since my school days and I even qualified for the finals of Piala Perdana Menteri (a national level debate competition) during my college days.

Asked whether the debate will focus on claims that Felda is bankrupt, Ahmad explained that the issue has been clarified in various newspapers and websites.

"So I hope this is related to something else," said Ahmad, adding that the debate is just a "publicity stunt".

Moreover, he believed that a debate would not solve anything compared to a dialogue session that can be prolonged for "even two days" until a solution agreeable to all is achieved.

Fallen on deaf ears

Nevertheless, Mazlan insisted that he was not trying to cause a furore or gain publicity, but they have raised issues pertaining to Felda for many years and most it have fallen on deaf ears.

"I grew up in a Felda scheme since I was two... since we formed this association I have travelled to about 90 percent of the 317 Felda settlements.

"I have known about these issues even before the deputy minister (Ahmad) was appointed to the cabinet. We have submitted many memorandums and reports but not even 10 percent of the issues we raised received any attention," he said.

He stressed that the issues can no longer be suppressed and the insult that Felda settlers are ungrateful must be explained.

Gov't to go on with defamation suit

Meanwhile, Ahmad confirmed that Felda will go ahead in its decision to sue PKR mouthpiece Suara Keadilan for its article claiming Felda is bankrupt.

Felda had earlier demanded RM200 million in damages and an apology from the party organ by July 7.

Ahmad said as the deadline expired yesterday, Felda will go ahead with its suit.

"They didn't give anything so we will see them in court... I will discuss this with our lawyers by today," he said.

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