

ETP must help ordinary folk, not big business
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Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon called for more focus on the bottom 40 percent of households, "the ordinary men and women" of the country, as part of the government's efforts to promote growth and inclusiveness rather than race- and religion-based considerations.

gerakan congress 071110 koh tsu koon "Rather than just pushing ahead to implement the various Entry Point Projects (EPPs) and Business Opportunities (BOs) identified under the ETP (Economic Transformation Programme), we should also take steps to ensure that these will actually benefit the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the ordinary men and women, and not just the big businessmen and corporations," the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department told his party's 39th national delegates' conference at Gerakan headquarters in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

Citing the New Economic Model (NEM) of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, Koh (above) said Gerakan supports the concept of "inclusiveness" as part and parcel of the drive towards a high-income economy.

"Inclusiveness" means that we should promote more effective and meaningful participation by all Malaysians in the economic development of the country, as well as more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth, and not just accumulation of wealth amongst the elite groups.

"The lower and middle income groups must be further empowered through education and capacity building, as well as being offered ample opportunity for self-advancement and upward social mobility," said Koh.

In contrast to the emphasis by certain quarters of quantitative and race-based approaches to development, the former Penang chief minister said there should be more attention on improving qualitatively in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

Koh also voiced support for Najib's market-friendly affirmative initiatives, but said these "must be implemented efficiently and equitably, in a fair and firm, transparent and consistent manner."

Rather than quibbling on the amount of funds to be injected in activities that eventually see abuse and wastage, the government should focus on the actual impact and outcome for the target groups and not merely the input of funds which may be abused and wasted, said Koh.

gerakan life member council congress 061110 koh tsu koon "No doubt, certain quantitative targets still need to be set to address and correct imbalances in certain areas, for example, the under-representation of Chinese and Indians in the civil service, and of Malays and other Bumiputeras in several key economic activities.

"However, we must try to seek and implement more inclusive and effective approaches which are based on needs and merit, and not just race," he said.

He also contrasted the approach of nurturing and supporting "genuine multiracial

partnerships and ventures” that emphasise “mutual learning and mutual support” as opposed to the practice of rent-seeking and 'Ali Baba-type' of businesses.

“Gerakan calls for a new strategy of initiatives and incentives, mentoring and monitoring, to promote such genuine 1Malaysia business partnerships which should be given due recognition and reward.

“A more inclusive and effective strategy, well implemented, will realise the objective of restructuring society within a conducive atmosphere of good will and harmony, in the spirit of our federal constitution and Rukun Negara,” said Koh.

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