

**Elected Public Officials Should Put Their Country First**  
**MalaysianMirror.com**  
**20 January 2012**  
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DAP urges BN to take a bipartisan approach towards promoting transparency and accountability in Malaysia by publicly declaring their assets. Whilst revealing the asset declarations of ministers and their immediate family members to the public may endanger the individuals concerned, as a first step those holding public office should disclose their assets publicly.

In the interest of bipartisanship, DAP is willing to start only with Ministers, Deputy Ministers or state excos publicly declaring their assets instead of their family members. Declaring to the Prime Minister alone or only to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission(MACC) is not enough.

For this reason, the refusal of MACC to openly endorse the principle of public declaration of assets by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and state EXCOS deserve strong condemnation. I can understand BN's concerns that such asset declarations may endanger public officials.

However BN should also understand public concerns that failure to do so may also endanger Malaysia.

Those aspiring to be leaders should put their country first by being more willing to endanger themselves than endangering Malaysia. For this reason, a public declaration of assets by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and state excos is a necessary first step towards ensuring that public interest is protected over and above any private benefit.

Penang state EXCO members created history last week by being the first elected public officials in Malaysia to publicly declare their assets. Information about the EXCO members' liabilities or loans and that the source of income were from their statutory allowances were also disclosed.

The Penang state EXCO public allowances as EXCOs and ADUNs can be referred from the Enakmen Anggota Pentadbiran dan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri(Saraan) 1980, which was also uploaded. Such information were even made available on the Penang state government website of [www.penang.gov.my](http://www.penang.gov.my). This marks an important milestone towards ensuring that there is no accumulation of unexplained and extraordinary wealth by elected public officials.

The Penang state government took a further step in appointing the internationally renowned accounting and audit firm, KPMG and its senior partner Chartered Accountant Ooi Kok Seng, for the verification exercise and to formulate the template of asset declaration. Ooi was present at the press conference on 12 January 2012 in Penang publicly declaring the assets, where he said that KPMG is required to uphold professional standards of compliance with the principles of objectivity, independence and no conflict of interest before undertaking any task.

The Penang state government's faith in the MACC has been shaken by MACC's perceived failure to act against BN's leaders involved in questionable deals and contracts as well as their perceived willingness to be used by BN for political purposes and lack of independent action. Penang state government's lack of faith in MACC's commitment to fight corruption is evident not only by their failure to act against various reports made by me in the past but also by the present Penang state government to the MACC.

The deteriorating state of corruption in Malaysia is highlighted by the decline in Malaysia's rankings in the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index from No. 37 in 2003 to No. 60 last year.

For this reason, verification by an internationally renowned audit and accounting firm would attract greater credibility and reliability than by MACC.

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