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Report on bumi equity inaccurate: PM

PUTRAJAYA: The prime minister has described the report released by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) on the New Economic Policy as inaccurate, baseless and irresponsible.

The report, which concluded that the NEP target of 30% bumiputra equity had been achieved, and in fact exceeded, had drawn criticism from various quarters which maintain that the equity was 18.9% in 2004.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi questioned the accuracy of the report as it was based

on a survey of 1,000 companies.

He said the information and documents used by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) when preparing the 9th Malaysia Plan involved surveys on 600,000 companies in Malaysia.

"When information is inaccurate and the base of the survey is inaccurate, how can the conclusion made be accurate. This is an inaccurate conclusion."

He said if this conclusion is used as a basis for discussion in public forums, it could cause various reactions, "which I think is not good".

Abdullah said the report had raised many questions and could cause people to make accusations against others.

"The action of tabling the survey, which in my opinion is incomplete and inaccurate, is something I see as irresponsible."

He said the survey's treatment of government-link companies (GLCs) as bumiputra concerns is incorrect as they are government companies.

"If everybody think GLCs are bumiputra, it is wrong and it will create a lot of anger. It is not right and is very irresponsible."

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the 5th meeting of the National Implementation Task Force for the 9th Malaysian Plan at his office here.

Asked if he planned to call for a snap general election after Umno decided to postpone its party election next year, he said: "Why should I? Give a reason why I should."

On whether he was seeking another huge mandate from the people, Abdullah said he still had a lot of time to deliver his promises to them.

Asked about the cabinet's stance on Singapore Minister

Mentor Lee Kuan Yew's reply letter, Abdullah said he had nothing further to say.

"The cabinet agreed with my stand and the decision I had made."

Asked if he considered the issue closed, he added that he was not making any more statements on it.

"We can't tell them what to say or not to say. As far as I am concerned, I have said what I have to say."

Aside from this matter, he said relations between the two countries are the same and there has not been any other

repercussions.

On the task force meeting, Abdullah said it discussed ways to improve the standard of schools and teaching in rural areas as many of them are lagging.

Among the steps to be taken are to improve laboratory facilities, including computers, electricity and water supply and increasing the number of teachers.

About the status of projects under the 9MP, he said about 50% of projects have been tendered out, adding that he wanted things to move faster.