

THE STAR

DATE: 20/03/2008

Abdullah rolls off to-do list

The Star - 20/3/2008

Stay away from corruption, Cabinet told

By V.P. SUJATA and MAZWIN NIK ANIS
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi expects those in his new Cabinet to stay away from corruption, serve with integrity and dignity, go to the ground often and organise frequent meet-the-grassroots sessions.

The Prime Minister also wants his ministers to be people-friendly *wakil rakyat*, be ever willing to serve, and be ready to continue with government policies that are popular among the people and the private sector.

During his inaugural post-election Cabinet meeting, Abdullah reminded his ministers to be well-behaved.

"They must completely reject corruption. They must stay away from corrupt practices and there should be no compromise on this issue.

"We are waging a war against corruption and we are serious about it," he told a packed press conference after the meeting.

Abdullah also spoke at length on the importance of addressing and attending to issues that had emerged during the election, adding it was crucial to take note of the message that the people had relayed to Barisan Nasional through the election results.

He said the issues that would be closely looked into included judiciary reforms, inflation, crime and the aspirations of the younger generation.

"We need to understand them and respond to their needs. At the same time, we need to step up implementation efforts. It has to be

effective, vigorous and be carried out with greater determination. We must ensure that our projects create greater success and bring more prosperity to the rakyat," he said.

On the Ninth Malaysia Plan, which has entered its second phase, the Prime Minister said whatever that has been drawn up must be carried out, adding the Economic Planning Unit would draw up a study on the matter for the Cabinet to review and discuss.

On the fate of the projects that were drawn up for the five states that had fallen to the opposition, Abdullah said he would be discussing with the respective state governments as some of the projects had been decided upon and money had been paid.

Abdullah also briefed his ministers on the decision to have everyone publicly declare their assets, which would be done twice throughout the five-year term, adding that the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) would come up with forms for them to fill up for the process of declaring their assets.

He said that an annual review would also be held to gauge the effectiveness of the government's actions, especially in responding to issues and problems, adding the present system of having a review at the end of every four years was insufficient.

The Prime Minister said that Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak spoke on behalf of the rest, pledging their support and loyalty to the government and promised to work hard for the people, adding he was touched to see their determination, which reflected unity and the spirit of togetherness.