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Focus on working class

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Govt to do more to help them, says Pak Lah

PUTRAJAYA: The 2009 Budget will see the Government doing more for low- and middle-income wage earners so they can have a better quality of life, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Prime Minister said that while the Budget would be formulated with the national mission of Vision 2020 in mind, it would also introduce new initiatives for a better distribution and sharing of the nation's wealth among Malaysians from all walks of life.

Abdullah said it was important for everyone to put on their thinking caps to find ways to help the Government provide more assistance to those in need, among them senior citizens and the disabled.

"We need innovative and clever ideas to tackle the rising cost of living and dwindling supply of food," he said in his opening remarks to the 2009 Budget consultation session with backbenchers yesterday.

"We need views from all, and we hope that MPs, being close to the rakyat, can give us positive feedback and suggestions on the issues and, at the same time, provide satisfactory services to the rakyat."

The Prime Minister said the Government would continue to give "sound and strong support" to the private sector, particularly small- and medium-scale industries, adding that the development of regional economic corridors was the most suitable platform to encourage such activities.

"At the same time, we need to ensure no one is left out of mainstream development. The 2009



Money matters: Abdullah arriving at the Finance Ministry to chair the 2009 Budget Consultation Session with Backbenchers Club members in Putrajaya yesterday.

Budget will see sustainable economic growth that goes hand in hand with ensuring the prosperity of the people," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop said the four-hour session with the backbenchers was fruitful, as a lot of ideas and suggestions were thrown up on areas that could be improved on.

He said most MPs wanted the

Government to continue with critical infrastructure such as providing electricity and water to all homes, and the construction of roads.

"The MPs also suggested that public transportation be improved, not only in big cities like Kuala Lumpur but in the smaller towns and rural areas as well.

"They also gave their views on how the Government could improve the quality of life of Malaysians, and

all these suggestions will be looked at and considered," he said.

Jerlun MP Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said the dialogue was a good opportunity for Barisan Nasional MPs to raise issues and suggestions that they have for the Budget directly with the Prime Minister.

"I raised a few suggestions related to agriculture, especially padi farming, on how we need to emulate Thailand," he said.