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Dr M all for Cabinet members to declare assets

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is in favour of Cabinet members declaring their assets, but it should not be to the public.

Instead, suggested the former prime minister, ministers and deputy ministers could declare their assets to a neutral body that has no political interest.

"It (asset declaration) is good, if they report to a body that is neutral that is not siding with any political party. .

"This is so that it will not be used for political purposes," said Dr Mahathir at the MCA Chinese New Year open house here on Sunday.

"If the asset declaration is made

If the asset declaration is made public, then people will focus on that and not on unity or development.

-TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

public, then people will focus on that and not on unity or development."

Based on current practice, Cabinet members report to the Prime Minister, said Dr Mahathir, who led the country for 22 years before he stepped down in 2003.

He also said those who become ministers must be honest.

"If they feel they are not honest, please resign and don't wait to be kicked out."

"I resigned, I didn't get kicked out," he quipped.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a suggestion by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) that Cabinet ministers declare their assets as well as that of their family to the MACC.

International Trade and Industries Deputy Minister Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said if the proposal is agreed upon by those bound by it he would agree for the declaration of assets of Cabinet members as well as their spouses and other family members to the MACC.

"In practice, the declaration of assets is something all ministers do

before the prime minister upon their appointment.

"It is one of the first things we are required to do and are given a form to fill.

"As to whether the declaration should also be submitted to the MACC, I will follow suit if all agree," he said, when met at the same function.

However, he said it would be fair if the declaration also included liabilities faced by the ministers.

Asked if the declaration of assets should be made public, Mukhriz said it would be agreeable if the opposition does likewise.

"I would also like to know where they (Opposition) get their money from and which international bodies are contributing to them and the reasons behind it," he added.