

PM: Ministers not weak, but EAC a necessity

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PUTRAJAYA: The Economic Action Council has been set up not because of a lack of confidence in the existing set-up of the government, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said it was important to listen to views from those who were not in the government, adding that he had made a similar move previously.

"When I was the fourth prime minister I also set up a similar council. But I didn't set it up immediately after I became the PM. It was only set up much later.

"The Cabinet then had given me

its full cooperation and was successful in the development of the country. But I still set up the council (now) because we always want to listen to the views of other people - from their own perspective.

"Any government that doesn't want to listen to views from outsiders would go wrong, even if the Cabinet is made up of brilliant people," he told reporters at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here.

He held the press conference after chairing a Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia meeting.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on a blog posting by Datuk A. Kadir Jasin - his communication and media adviser - who claimed that the setting up of EAC was a sign of the government's admission that its Cabinet was not up to par.

Dr Mahathir said the EAC would be used to gather feedback on real happenings on the ground and to seek solutions to the problems.

"We should have set up the council in the beginning when we formed the government, but we have been busy. Now, we have the time to do so.

"The council will be focused on economic matters because we are having problems inherited from the previous governments.

"We have been too occupied in trying to resolve debt, so much so, that we did not have the time to see the problems affecting investors and others," he said.

On Monday, the Prime Minister's Office announced the establishment of the EAC, which is chaired by Dr Mahathir.

The 16-men council consists of current and former Cabinet ministers, economists, businessmen,

experts and representatives from non-government organisations.

They include Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng, prominent economist Prof Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Public Bank managing director Tan Sri Tay Ah Lek and former minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz.

Watch the video
thestartv.com

