

'Govt to use new method to measure poverty'

A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL poverty index (MPI) is set to be adopted by the government to provide a more accurate picture of the poverty situation in Malaysia.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this was because the old poverty line income measurement was no longer suitable due to current conditions.

"We found that income is not the only indicator of a person being identified as poor, but it also includes treatment, facilities and aid provided to them.

"Our plan to reduce poverty is to ensure that they (the poor) can get enough income to spend on three things, which are food, clothing and housing.

"This will indicate whether they are in the poor category or otherwise, and this will be included in the new basic measurement called MPI."

Dr Mahathir was answering a question from Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (Port Dickson-PKR) on the method of measuring poverty in the country, following a report by the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights Professor Philip Alston that the level of poverty in Malaysia was getting worse.

To another question by Fahmi Fadzil (Lembah Pantai-PKR) on what can be expected in the upcoming 2020 Budget concerning the government's efforts to eliminate poverty, Dr Mahathir said the government would give priority to areas and states that earned less than the others.

"We don't have enough funds for all developments, so we need to set our priorities on what should be done first and what, later.

"So, let's wait for the budget to be tabled by the finance minister (Lim Guan Eng)," he told the Dewan Rakyat here yesterday.

The 2020 Budget, themed "Shared Prosperity: Sustainability and Inclusive Growth Towards High Income Economy" will be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat on Friday.