

# MINISTERS MUST DECLARE ASSETS

**Move among slew of measures decided at cabinet panel meeting to boost national governance ecosystem**

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**M**EMBERS of the government, including ministers and deputy ministers, will be required to declare their assets soon.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said this would be done once a new more comprehensive asset declaration format was ready.

This was decided at a Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

It said the meeting yesterday focused on recommendations on a more holistic governance.

This, it said, was important to improve responsibility, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the federal administration.

"The national governance ecosystem will be strengthened via the National Good Governance Plan (MyGovernance) as a guide for the public sector to implement good governance principles.

"The Malaysian Governance Index will become a mechanism for the measurement of the level of good governance in the country, while the Governance Act will be implemented to ensure effective governance practices," read the statement.

On Jan 17, Anwar had said there was a need to make ministers' asset declarations more transparent to keep them from becoming a "political gimmick".

He had said the declaration of assets in the past had been a "farce" as people "could have hundreds of millions but only declare RM10 or RM11 million".

He had claimed in the past, ministers were not honest in their asset declarations, and made a mockery of the process.

Yesterday's meeting also agreed that the National Audit Report would be tabled periodically to the cabinet for speedier follow-up action, beginning with the 2022 report in a new, more structured format.

The role of the committee, it said, would also be empowered and known as the Special Cabinet Committee on National Governance (JKKTN).

This committee would encourage good principles of governance be taken into account in all policy planning and development as well as implementation of all government agency programmes and initiatives.

"JKKTN will also be empowered to review issues of weak governance in statutory bodies, including public institutions of higher learning, as well as sub-

sidaries and entities with government interests.

"The maximum number of directorships a civil servant can hold in statutory bodies, as well as government-linked statutory bodies and entities will also be reviewed to improve the effectiveness of the role of civil servants on the board of directors."

The meeting also discussed progress on the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) 2019-2023, as well as the direction of anti-corruption initiatives in line with Article 5 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

"The government agreed to continue the NACP with a new national-level strategy known as the National Anti-Corruption Strategies."

PMO said the government also viewed seriously the issuance of support letters, which carry an element of corruption and abuse of power, which could affect the image of the government.

It said a new guideline on support letters would be issued to ensure that they were not abused for personal gain.

The meeting also agreed in principle to improve the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010 (Act 711) to ensure that complaint channels were reliable.

"The government is committed to the agenda of empowering governance to the best of its abilities to support the nation's development and ensure that each government effort is free of corruption and abuse of power."